NOW AND THEN

(THE GASLIGHT ADDITION)

By Marlene King

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THE GASLIGHT ADDITION

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - DAY

It's a lazy, summer afternoon in a place you won't find near Los Angeles. A neighborhood. As WE PAN across a row of back yards, exactly the same size and shape:

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
There's a point in your life when something in your past calls and pulls you back. Chrissy's call came out of the blue, asking me to honor a pact we made the summer I turned 12. I didn't really want to go, but as the time grew nearer I realized I had no choice.

MR. SMITH mows his lawn. The smell of fresh cut grass drifts toward his neighbor's yard.

Next door, ten KIDS play a serious game of kick ball. The PITCHER rolls the ball and POW! A RUNNER rounds third base and heads for home.

Their neighbors, an ELDERLY COUPLE, sit on the back porch and sip lemonade.

WE REACH the last house on the block.

A MAGNIFICENT OLD TREE HOUSE is the focal point of the backyard. WE HEAR Carol King's "YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND" coming from inside the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Early American decor. Plastic covers on the furniture and lamp shades. WE FOLLOW the music, toward the back of the house.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The SONG PLAYS on the tape player.

PINK PUMPS tap to the music on the high-low shag carpet. We PAN UP to reveal 33 year old CHRISTINA DEWITT, a slightly overweight housewife, sitting at her vanity. Avon's been knocking on her door. She wears a pink, polyester ensemble and models hair height only a mid-western beautician could achieve.

She SINGS along to the song as she looks at her reflection. Something's not right. She reaches for a can of "White Rain" and lifts her hair even higher. WE HEAR the front door SWING open and SLAM shut.

ROBERTA (O.S.)
Anybody home?

CHRISTINA
Be right there.

She surveys her look and winks at herself. Hot stuff. Then, SLOWLY she stands. It takes an incredible effort because she's VERY pregnant. Looking like she could birth a baby whale, WE REALIZE she's due any second.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DR. ROBERTA MARTIN, a small town family practitioner, sets a case of Bud Light on the counter. She twists open a beer bottle and makes herself at home.

Roberta, also 33, wears minimal make up. Although it rarely occurs to her, she's a natural beauty. She wears a doctor's smock over faded 501's and a white t-shirt. She has an appealing tomboyish quality about her that often attracts men and women.

Christina enters and Roberta fixates on her huge stomach.

ROBERTA
My God.

CHRISSY
What?

ROBERTA
I think you got bigger overnight.

CHRISSY
Yeah, well if I this baby grows another inch, I'm gonna reach in and yank it out myself.

Roberta grimaces at the thought then notices the latest issue of "PEOPLE" magazine lying on the counter and picks it up.

CLOSE ON: Magazine cover. TV Star, Tina Tercell, remarries her ex-husband. Her fourth marriage in four years.

CHRISTINA
Can you believe that tramp?

Christina loads the beer bottles into the refrigerator.

CHRISTINA
What does she have that people get so excited about?

Roberta looks at the magazine cover.

ROBERTA
Long legs, a tiny waist and large, perky breasts.

CHRISTINA
(reprimanding)
Roberta, you know how I feel about swearing.

ROBERTA
Chrissy, breast is not a dirty word.

Christina covers her ears.

CHRISTINA
I can't hear you.

Roberta scans the article.

CHRISTINA
(with skepticism)
It says in there she was orphaned at age seven when her mother died in a freak kitchen accident and her father ran off with a parish nun.

ROBERTA
It also says she attributes her three failed marriages to her extreme fear of intimacy.
(thinking about it)
I think that's probably true.

CHRISTINA
Please.

Roberta tosses aside the magazine and glances outside. She looks at the TREE HOUSE. Memories. A smile on Roberta's face. Good memories. She snaps out of her daydream and turns back to Christina.

ROBERTA
Have you talked to Samantha?

CHRISSY
I left another message, but I haven't heard from her.
(beat)
She probably thinks she's too good for us now that she's won that book award.

ROBERTA
I don't think that's true at all. She's just busy, like the rest of us.

The DOORBELL chimes.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Hello?

ROBERTA
That's her!

CHRISTINA
Where's the camera?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

FLASH! The room illuminates as Christina snaps a picture of Roberta hugging SAMANTHA ALBERTSON hello.

Samantha is east coast - big city hip. Her pale complexion is only made more noticeable by the black turtleneck she wears.

ROBERTA
It's good to see you.

SAMANTHA
You look great, Roberta!

Samantha turns to Christina.

SAMANTHA
And you...

A pink pregnant sight to behold.

SAMANTHA
(speechless)
Look at you.

Chrissy hugs her.

CHRISSY
Thanks for coming.

BEEP BEEP! A car horn BLARES.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A long, black limousine pulls into the driveway. Little kids run up to see who's inside. The DRIVER opens the passenger door.

Out steps TINA TERCELL. Sexy, blonde bombshell. The kids surround her. She relishes the attention. Tina finally spots her three, long time friends, watching from the porch.

TINA
Hey bitches.

CHRISSY
(flabbergasted)
My Lord.

A hug from Roberta. An air-kiss from Chrissy. And then a moment. Tina and Samantha look at each other then break into

smiles. They share a really big hug.

SAMANTHA
It's good to see you, Teeny.

TINA
It's been too damn long.

INT. FOYER - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chrissy waddles as she leads the way into the room. Samantha looks around in amazement.

SAMANTHA
I can't believe it.

CHRISSY
What?

SAMANTHA
It looks just like it did when your mother lived here.
(beat)
I was sorry to hear she passed away.

TINA
(sincerely)
Me too.

CHRISSY
(it's still painful)
Thanks.

An awkward silence falls over them and for a moment. It's uncomfortable. WE REALIZE they're not the tight knit group they used to be.

CHRISSY
Well, what can I get you two to drink?

SAMANTHA
Whatever.

TEENY
Anything.

ROBERTA
(upbeat)
How about a beer?

SAMANTHA & TEENY
Great.

CHRISSY
Be right back.

ROBERTA
Let me help.

They leave and Teeny immediately comments on the plastic covered early american decor.

TEENY
Who do you think she takes the plastic off for?

Samantha attempts to suppress a grin.

SAMANTHA
Shhh.

TEENY
I mean, we're company right? If ever there was a time to take off the plastic, this would be it.

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING

Christina's HUSBAND fires up the barbecue. Hamburgers and hot dogs sizzle.

THE WOMEN kick off their shoes and pop open some cold beers. They recapture a glimpse of their past as they hang in and around the tree house.

Samantha and Tina (known to her friends as TEENY) rock back and forth on swings, hanging from an overhead branch.

Christina (forever known to her friends as CHRISSY) sips on a Fresca as she sits on the bottom of the aluminum slide protruding out of the tree house.

Roberta, inside the tree house, hangs out of a window.

SAMANTHA
I can't believe you kept the tree house.

CHRISSY
Morton wanted to tear it down and put in a "Dough Boy" but I just couldn't part with it.

She looks up at the old tree house with great affection.

CHRISSY
Besides, it's not mine to tear down. It belongs to all of us.
(incredibly sincere)
I really want to thank you guys for showing up.
(MORE)

CHRISSY (CONT.)
(caressing her round stomach)
After two false starts, the third try's got me scared to death.

SAMANTHA
We made a pact, remember?

They remember.

CHRISSY
I really didn't think I'd be this afraid.

ROBERTA
You'll be a great mom, Chrissy.

TEENY
God, I can't believe you're having a baby. I feel so old. Shit.

CHRISSY
Could you try, for one day, to express yourself without cursing?

TEENY
What are you, the dialogue police?

Roberta jumps out of the tree house and lands solid on her feet.

CHRISSY
(disapproving)
Roberta.

ROBERTA
(proud of herself)
Still got it.

Roberta pushes Samantha and Teeny on the swings.

SAMANTHA
We're all prisoners of time. It's one of our own worst enemies. Instead of pushing us forward it prevents us from going anywhere.

Unbeknownst to Samantha, Chrissy looks at Roberta and gestures Samantha is crazy in the head. Roberta tries to ignore her and changes the subject.

ROBERTA
So what are you working on now, Sam?

SAMANTHA
(frustrated)
I'm between projects.

TEENY
Stuck?

SAMANTHA
Yeah, stuck somewhere between stagnant and dead.

CHRISSY
If you ask me, you ought to write a book about something people can relate to. I didn't understand half of that last thing of yours I read.

TEENY
She'll take that as a compliment.

SAMANTHA
What's not to understand? It was a comprehensive theoretical analysis of Isaac Asimov's work.

CHRISSY
Nobody cares about that crap. Why don't you write a romance novel, like Danielle Steel? Now there's a lady who knows how to write a page turner.

Samantha and Teeny stare at Chrissy. They exchange looks and bust up laughing.

CHRISSY
(defensive)
Go ahead and laugh, but the jokes on you, not me.

TEENY
Really? How so?

CHRISSY
You two have become very peculiar people.

TEENY
You're just jealous.

CHRISSY
Of your weirdo life. Not in a quazillion years. It's true, isn't it Roberta? The longer they're gone the weirder they get.

ROBERTA
I don't know. I just think it would be nice to see you guys more often. What's it been? Six years?

CHRISSY
Roberta, for example, has chosen to be alternative, but she is still normal. She hasn't been married four times or gone through a series of monogamous relationships... or wear all black. She's happy. Aren't you Roberta?

ROBERTA
(embarrassed and amused)
Uh, yeah.

CHRISSY
(to Sam & Teeny)
I believe if you two spent more time here with us normal people, you might just realize what you're missing.

TEENY
(sincere)
I'm sure we're missing a lot.

As Samantha swings, a resolved look comes across her face.

SAMANTHA
This place gave us each a big part of ourselves.

She swings higher and higher. WE FOLLOW the motion of her glide, up and over the house... LANDING right in the center of --

THE GASLIGHT ADDITION -- IN THE YEAR 1970. A residential village where identical, single story brick houses sit side by side. Paint-trim and flowers differentiate the Smiths from the Jones'. A GAS LAMP POST stands in the front yard of every house on the street.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
If we spend our adult lives searching for something we lost in our youth, I'm looking for what disappeared during the summer of 1970. It started out like any other summer... school ended and we had three months of freedom ahead of us. But that year freedom wasn't enough. We wanted independence. A place to go where we could be in charge. A place to call our own. That's why we decided to buy the tree house... and the quest to earn the money was our summer goal.

As WE PAN through the neighborhood.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
The four of us lived in the Gaslight Addition. It was a dream neighborhood. A brand new pre-planned community built when new was in and old was out.

A fresh cut lawn and neatly trimmed shrubbery distinguishes the Albertson's house. More than forty bicycles flood the driveway.

EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

The biggest game of red-rover you've ever seen. Every kid in the neighborhood has joined in. Fifty KIDS (ranging in age from 8-14) form a straight line, join hands and face off against --

THE COMPETITION. Down to four twelve year old girls who stand holding hands. They are all dressed similarly in rolled up cut off shorts, various colored shirts tied up at the waist, and flip flop sandals.

SAMANTHA, the tallest of the group is lanky, has long, straight hair and WEARS GLASSES. She's a straight "A" student without trying, and obsessed with the super natural. She's a quirky girl who has the unique gift of being both creative and intelligent. Neither qualities are appreciated by your peers at age 12.

CHRISSY is a little chubby and lot pristine. Her hair is in pig-tails and she only wears pink. Always. Every group has a whiner and in this group, she's it. Already practical, she's the most sensible of the group.

ROBERTA is a tomboy who'd almost always rather be playing softball. Cursed with early puberty, she wears her shirts extra baggy to hide her developing breasts. She has an angry side and is always ready for a fight.

TINA is the smallest of the four, hence her nickname, TEENY. She's always compelled to be the center of attention. The first of the group to be interested in boys, she stuffs her training bra with whatever is available. (Therefore her breast size will vary throughout the film)

The girls huddle and decide who to call over.

SAMANTHA
How about Bobby Fricker?

CHRISSY
Gross. He's always picking his nose... and eating his boogers.

ROBERTA
So what, he's a wimp.

TEENY
I say we call over Brett Jones.

The girls all look over at -- BRETT JONES -- a hunk of a guy who's a year ahead of them in school.

TEENY
This could be our last chance to talk to him all summer.

SAMANTHA
He could break through without even trying.

TEENY
(hopeful)
And take me back with him.

CHRISSY
Can you get your mind off boys for maybe a minute?

TEENY
Gee I don't know. I've never tried.

ROBERTA
Knock it off you guys. Who's it gonna be?

Samantha takes charges and looks over their opponents.

SAMANTHA
Bobby Fricker.

They form a straight line and lock hands. Samantha announces the decision.

SAMANTHA
Red rover, red rover send Bobby Fricker right over.

The opposing TEAM moans and groans.

BOBBY FRICKER - a little geek - pulls his finger out of his nose. He takes a deep breath and charges toward the girls as his teammates cheer him on.

The girl's eyes widen as Bobby picks up speed.

TEENY
Booger alert!

SLAM! Bobby plows between Samantha and Teeny. They grip-lock hands. Bobby pushes forward but doesn't break the chain. He falls back on his ass and ALL FOUR GIRLS STAND UNITED.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - NIGHT

A near full moon shines bright. The gas lamp posts in the

neighborhood flame.

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lit by moonlight. Numerous bookshelves are filled with fiction and non-fiction all pertaining to ghosts, witches, vampires and various other supernatural goblins. A poster of BARNABUS COLLINS, from "DARK SHADOWS" fame, hangs over the bed.

Samantha reads The Fall of the House of Usher under the beam of a flashlight. WE HEAR her parents TALKING. A door SLAMS! Engrossed in her book, Samantha's not phased.

MRS. ALBERTSON (O.S.)
Ted please.

The quarrel escalates, as does the volume of their voices.

MR. ALBERTSON (O.S.)
Please what!?

MRS. ALBERTSON (O.S)
You'll wake the girls.

Another door SLAMS. Their argument continues, behind closed doors. Samantha looks up from her book.

ANGELA, her four year old sister, stands at the foot of Samantha's bed. Puppy dog eyes.

SAMANTHA
Okay.

Angela smiles, climbs into the bed and snuggles next to her sister. Samantha turns the page of her book and reads on.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
My parents had been fighting for as long as I could remember. It never bothered me. It was the opposite actually. There's comfort in consistency.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - MORNING

Fathers leave for work. Mothers wave goodbye.

INT. ROBERTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Roberta, alone in her room, rips a piece of masking tape from the roll and sticks it to her dresser.

CLOSE ON: Ten long pieces of masking tape are affixed to the dresser. Next to them, a small, black and white PHOTO propped up against the mirror. The woman in the picture is incredibly beautiful.

ROBERTA, wearing her bra and panties, stands sideways in front of her mirror. She assesses her breast size with a measuring tape, marks the spot with her finger and looks at her progress. Frustration.

ROBERTA
(discouraged)
No matter what I do, they just keep getting bigger.

Roberta flattens her boobs and wraps a piece of masking tape around her chest. Then another, as she continues what has become her morning routine. A KNOCK on the door.

MR. MARTIN (O.S.)
Better hurry up. Your breakfast's getting cold.

Roberta hurries to get dressed.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Roberta grew up with her dad and three older brothers. Her mother died when she was four. That's her in the picture.

Roberta grabs the photo from her dresser and gently slides it in her back pocket.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Roberta never left the house without that picture.

INT. TEENY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The walls are covered with movie star posters. A blend of current "Tiger Beat" studs - David Cassidy and Bobby Sherman mixed in with the greats - Marilyn Monroe and James Dean.

TEENY (O.S.)
Tina, tell us how it felt at the exact moment when you realized you had won.

Teeny, modeling heavy make-up, her mother's most glamorous dress and a HUGE PAIR OF FAKE BREASTS, stands in front of her mirror and interviews herself.

TEENY
Well Rona, I can only say I've thought about this day... dreamed about this day, for as long as I can remember.

BUDDY, a handsome Golden Retriever sits on the bed, curiously watching his master.

TEENY
To win an Academy Award at such a young age is an enormous accomplishment. Where will you go from here?
(beat)
Well, first off Rona, thank you. As for what will come next, I'd like to direct.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Teeny was an only child. Her parents were country clubbers. Never around, really.. A typical upbringing for actors and pathological liars.

INT. CHRISSY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Pink, for as far as the eye can see. A canopy bed with a matching dresser and vanity, which is where WE FIND Chrissy, brushing her curly blond locks.

CHRISSY
Ninety two.
(another stroke)
Ninety three.

CHRISSY'S MOTHER (O.S)
Chrissy?

The bedroom door opens and Chrissy's mother, MRS. DEWITT, enters. Like mother like daughter. Chrissy is a miniature version of her mom, down to their matching pink outfits.

She inspects her daughter's room. Spotless. Wrong. She walks across the room and straightens a small crinkle in the bed spread.

CHRISSY
(still brushing)
Ninety eight, ninety nine, one hundred.

Mrs. Dewitt sits next to Chrissy. Parts her daughter's hair and braids the tightest pig tails in movie history.

MRS. DEWITT
Chrissy, I've been thinking about what you asked me?

CHRISSY
About sex?

Mrs. Dewitt tenses and pulls the pigtails even tighter.

MRS. DEWITT
You say that word so casually. It scares me.

CHRISSY
I'm sorry mommy.

MRS. DEWITT
I think you're much too young to be... informed. But, since your friends are trash mouths, I'd rather you hear the facts from me.

Mrs. Dewitt ponders how to break the news of the "dirty deed" to her daughter.

MRS. DEWITT
This may come as a shock to you...

Chrissy stares up at her mommy, waiting to hear the facts of life.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
As a direct result of this conversation, Chrissy will spend a significant part of her adult life wondering if she's ever had an orgasm.

EXT. DAYLIGHT ADDITION - LATE MORNING

Samantha, Teeny and Roberta wait for Chrissy. They sit on the street curb in front of her house. To kill time, Roberta throws rocks at a nearby aluminum trash can, Samantha reads her Poe paperback and Teeny plucks the petals off of a wild flower.

TEENY
(while plucking)
He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me...
(distraught)
He loves me not.

She tosses the bare stem on the ground, next to ten other stems and a pile of petals.

Samantha turns the page of her book and glances up for a second, noticing Teeny's large round breasts of the day.

SAMANTHA
What are you using today?

Teeny reaches into her shirt and pulls out --

TEENY
Nerf balls. I think they work well.

She stuffs it back in and sticks out her chest.

TEENY
Don't you?

Samantha really gives her chest a serious look.

SAMANTHA
It's a natural look. Texture wise I mean.

Roberta dispassionately looks at Teeny's chest.

ROBERTA
They're too round.

The older mail man, MR. WINCHESTER, heads up the sidewalk, toward the girls.

TEENY
Hey Mister Winchester, did my package come yet?

He reaches into his bag.

MR. WINCHESTER
Is this what you've been waiting for?

He hands her a package and she reads the label.

TEENY
It sure is!

As she rips open the box:

TEENY
(excited)
It's from the David Cassidy fan club.

She pulls out a LOVE BEAD NECKLACE.

TEENY
Isn't it cool?

MR. WINCHESTER
Very cool.

He moves on. Teeny puts on the necklace and models it for Samantha and Roberta.

TEENY
Well?

SAMANTHA
It looks just like the one he wears on the Partridge Family.

FOUR RAMBUNCTIOUS BOYS, ranging from eight to thirteen years old, tear down the street on their bicycles.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Those are the Wormers. The four most obnoxious brothers on the block. Everyone in the neighborhood felt sorry for their mother. Like us, the Womers' also had a summer goal. It was to make our lives miserable. They were the enemy.

TEENY spots the tough guys first.

TEENY
Oh great, it's the Wormers.

SAMANTHA
Just ignore 'em.

Chrissy walks out of her house and approaches her friends.

TEENY
(to Chrissy)
It's about time.

Roberta stands.

ROBERTA
(taunting)
Hey, wormy Wormers.

Just then, the Wormers weave across the road and head straight for the girls. The oldest, SCOTT, leads the pack.

SCOTT
Now.

Simultaneously, they all pull jello-filled balloons from under their jackets.

ROBERTA
Air raid!

The girls try to run, but it's too late.

WORMER #2
Bombs away.

Chrissy screams as SPLAT! The girls are drenched in lime jello.

The Wormers ride on. Roberta runs after them. She dives for Scott's bike but misses, landing face first on the pavement. She quickly gets up and ignores her scuffed knees.

ROBERTA
(yelling)
We owe you Wormers. And we always pay our debts.

Scott looks back over his shoulder.

SCOTT
Like we're really afraid of a bunch a girls.

ROBERTA
(tough girl)
You should be!

She flips them the bird as the Wormers ride out of sight.

EXT. SHELBYVILLE - DAY

It's small town America at its most charming. THE TOWN SQUARE is lined with mom and pop shops, owned by generations of the same families.

Smith's True Value Hardware stands next to Wanda's Beauty Salon which stands next to Murphy's Five and Dime Store which has always been next to Big Ed's clothing boutique for men and boys.

Catty corner from there, the town movie theatre boasts "Airport" on the marquee... starring Dean Martin, Helen Hayes and George Kennedy.

And in the front window of the local record shop, posters and album covers advertise current releases from Simon and Garfunkle, The Carpenters, Dionne Warwicke and Led Zeplin. In the center of the TOWN SQUARE stands the old brick county courthouse. On the courthouse lawn, bronze statues remember local war heros from the "Heart of America".

And as always, REXHALLS SODA SHOP is bustling with activity.

INT. REXHALLS - CONTINUOUS

This corner drug store and soda fountain is the hang out. "PIECE OF MY HEART" by Janis Joplin PLAYS on the juke box as --

Samantha, Teeny, Chrissy and Roberta sit at their regular table, a big red vinyl booth, scooted up next to the front pane-glass window. As usual, they're dressed in their summer uniform of cut-offs and tied up shirts.

Chrissy counts a pile of change and dollar bills as Teeny conducts the latest "Cosmo" magazine quiz and keeps score.

TEENY
Your idea of foreplay is "A" a candle lit dinner and moonlit walk on the beach? "B" making out on a bearskin rug at a local mountain cabin? "C" watching a sexy movie? Or "D" all of the above.

Teeny jots down their answers as they speak up:

SAMANTHA
B.

ROBERTA
E... none of the above.

TEENY
That's not a possible answer.

ROBERTA
(sighs)
Then B... I guess.

CHRISSY
(while counting)
Definitely A.

TEENY
Surprise surprise.

CHRISSY
What's that supposed to mean, bug brain?

TEENY
Nothing...

She ponders her insult.

TEENY
...mucus mouth?

ROBERTA
Mucus mouth... I like that. Not bad at all... for a hemorrhoid head.

SAMANTHA
You're all... feces faces.

The girls GROAN. Samantha wins an unspoken victory of grossness.

TEENY
I pick D... all of the above.

CHRISSY
Surprise surprise.

Teeny notices a group of four teenage girls at the counter. They're all wearing tube tops and looking very adult.

TEENY
(envious)
Maybe we should incorporate tube tops into our summer look.

ROBERTA
Forget it.

Teeny quietly relents and tallies up their "Cosmo" score.

CHRISSY
That's eighty two dollars and twenty four cents.

She pours the money back into a coffee can.

SAMANTHA
So how much more do we need?

As she flattens a piece of paper out on the table.

CHRISSY
Twenty three more dollars and the tree house is ours.

CLOSE ON: PAPER - A page torn out of the Sears catalogue. An ad for a put-it-together-yourself, tree house.

BACK TO SCENE

TEENY
I say the first night we get it, we have a slumber party.

SAMANTHA
Definately.

ROBERTA
My dad said he'll pay us fifteen bucks if we paint his new garage door.

SAMANTHA
Great. We can handle it after the carnival.

CHRISSY
We'll raise at least fifteen dollars there.

SAMANTHA
And the garage door should put us over the top. We'll definitely get the tree house way before the end of the summer.

Roberta glances out the window and nudges Samantha.

ROBERTA
(impressed)
Get a load of your mom.

Everyone looks.

CHRISSY
(shocked)
How short are those shorts?

TEENY
(with envy)
How tall are those boots?!

CUE UP: Nancy Sinatra's "BOOTS" as --

GIRLS POV. - Samantha's mother struts down the sidewalk, wearing RED HOT PANTS and WHITE GO-GO BOOTS.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
I had no idea why, but earlier that summer, my mom began to dress like Nancy Sinatra.

BACK TO SCENE

TEENY
Your mom is so cool.

Samantha, embarrassed, changes the subject.

SAMANTHA
You guys it's a full moon tonight. A festival of the spirits who return to earth and walk among the living.

Just then, their spooky looking waitress, WILADINE, brings four sodas and sets them on the table. Wearing all black, she's an eccentric kook, with a far away look in her eyes.

WILADINE
That's a dollar five, boys.

They dig into their pockets and hand over the change.

CHRISSY
We're girls.

WILADINE
I know.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW: Unbeknownst to the girls, Samantha's mom enters an ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.

WILADINE winks at Chrissy and walks away.

CHRISSY
She is so off.

TEENY
What do you expect? She's a witch.

The girls don't believe a word Teeny says.

TEENY
I swear. She's got voo doo dolls and everything. I saw 'em.

SAMANTHA
Where?

TEENY
At her house. And hear this. One of the dolls looked just like Principal Winters. And do you know what? There was a needle sticking right in the middle of his heart.
(beat)
I saw it the morning before he had his heart attack.

Wiladine returns with their change. They can't help but look at her like she's from Mars. She gives them a creepy look right back.

SAMANTHA
So, do we try another seance tonight?

CHRISSY
It didn't work last time and it won't work this time.

SAMANTHA
I'm telling you. This is the one night when the barrier between the dead and the living can be broken. I read it in the Encyclopedia of Supernatural Phenomenon. It'll work. I promise.

TEENY
You actually read the Encyclopedia of Supernatural Phenomenon?

SAMANTHA
Cover to cover.

CHRISSY
You are so weird.

TEENY
I'm in.

ROBERTA
Me too.

CHRISSY
If I get caught I'm going to be grounded for the rest of the summer.

SAMANTHA
You're not going to get caught. I say we meet in the cemetery at eleven and don't worry.
(genuinely spooky)
I'll bring a cross to protect us from the evil demons who lurk about the graveyard.

TEENY
Okay, here are the scores.
(reading "Cosmo")
Roberta, you're a woman on the verge. Although your sensuality is yet to be tapped, it is like a volcano ready to erupt... Whoa, look out for Roberta.

ROBERTA
That's crap.

TEENY
(reading)
Samantha, you look before you leap and walk the fine line between romanticism and sex appeal. Don't be afraid to take the plunge. You might surprise yourself.

SAMANTHA
I'll keep that in mind.

TEENY
(reading)
Chrissy. Let go of your inhibitions before you dry up like a prune.

CHRISSY
What's that supposed to mean?

The others exchange a look and share a laugh at Chrissy's expense.

TEENY
Now me.
(reading)
Teeny, you are a sexual magnate, attracting men from the four corners of the world. Pace yourself.

She lowers the magazine, revealing a shit eating grin on her face.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - NIGHT

The Gaslight Addition sleeps. A deep-orange, full moon hangs low in the sky. An orchestra of CRICKETS is all WE HEAR.

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Samantha lies in bed and reads by the light of her flashlight. Again, WE HEAR her parents ARGUING behind closed doors. Samantha turns the page of her book. WE HEAR a DOOR SWING open. FOOTSTEPS in the hall.

MR. ALBERTSON (O.S.)
I'll get the rest when the girls are out of the house.

Samantha looks up from her book. Listens.

MRS. ALBERTSON (O.S.)
Maybe we should see a counselor.

Muffled TALKING as they move away from Samantha's bedroom door. Samantha jumps out of bed and tries to listen at the door, but can't make out what they're saying. WE REALIZE she's fully dressed to sneak out.

WE HEAR a car door SLAM and an engine CRANK. Samantha moves to the window and parts the curtains.

SAMANTHA'S POV. - MR. ALBERTSON, middle American nice guy, backs his middle class car out of the drive way.

BACK TO SCENE

Samantha waves to him, but he obviously doesn't see her. Stunned and clearly disturbed, Samantha watches until he drives out of sight.

WE HEAR maternal FOOTSTEPS approach. Not wanting to deal with her mother, Samantha dives into bed and pulls on the covers.

THE DOOR opens and a STREAK of LIGHT floods the room. It falls on --

SAMANTHA who pretends to be fast asleep. Her eyes closed tight.

MRS. ALBERTSON stands in the doorway. With a worried mother's look on her face, she studies her sleeping daughter. Finally, she leaves and closes the door.

SAMANTHA opens her eyes. She looks at the clock on her nightstand, which reads -- 10:50. Samantha climbs out of bed, slides open her bedroom window and very quietly sneaks out.

EXT. CEMETERY NIGHT - NIGHT

The full moon hangs over this dark and eire, final resting place.

CRYPTS are sealed with overgrown vines. HEADSTONES, some chiseled in the 1800's, are worn and weathered. SCATTERED LEAVES dance in the wind and MASSIVE OAK TREES seem to have

faces in this light and could come to life at any moment.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
I didn't tell the others about my father. Call me a fool, but I actually thought he'd be back. A wishful notion I held onto for years. At the time no one in the Gaslight Addition had gotten a divorce and the last thing I wanted was to be different from my friends.

SAMANTHA, ROBERTA, CHRISSY AND TEENY sit on a blanket, in the middle of a fenced-off, family plot. Arranged in a circle, they take this seance business very seriously.

Samantha places three white candles in the center of the circle and lights them, one by one. The candles FLAME and cast a FLICKERING GLOW on the girl's faces.

CHRISSY
It's cold. Maybe we should do this another night.

Samantha calls Chrissy's attention to the FULL MOON.

SAMANTHA
It has to be tonight.

CHRISSY
But I'm cold.

Roberta removes her sweatshirt and tosses it to Chrissy.

ROBERTA
Now I'll be cold, but maybe you'll shut up.

Chrissy slips it on. It fits her snugly. She looks chubbier than usual and she knows it.

CHRISSY
It makes me look fat.

TEENY
(matter of fact)
You are fat.

CHRISSY
I'm not fat.
(to Roberta)
Am I fat?

Before Roberta can answer:

SAMANTHA
Okay people. Lay your hands flat on the blanket and touch your pinkies and thumbs to the person's sitting next to you.

They comply and spread their hands out on the blanket, forming a complete circle.

TEENY
Let's contact Marilyn Monroe.

ROBERTA
She didn't cooperate last time.

CHRISSY
No one cooperated.

SAMANTHA
I think we should bring back someone buried in the cemetery.
(as she looks around the area)
How about Dear Johnny?

CLOSE ON: A nearby TOMBSTONE. The INSCRIPTION reads: REST IN PEACE "DEAR JOHNNY". BORN 1933 - DIED 1945.

SAMANTHA
Let's find out how he died.

TEENY
Maybe he was skinned alive by some weirdo psycho killer? If we bring him back we'll have to look at his skinless body.

The other girls stare at her blankly.

CHRISSY
That's disgusting.

ROBERTA
No, this is disgusting.

She turns away from the group. Her face hidden. When she turns back toward them, her eyelids are flipped inside out. Although they've seen this a hundred times, the gag still repulses her friends. They GROAN.

SAMANTHA
(to Roberta)
Are you through now?

ROBERTA
Yeah.

She pops her eyelids back into place.

SAMANTHA
Is everyone ready?

They join hands again.

ROBERTA
Ready.

TEENY
Ready.

SAMANTHA
Chrissy?

CHRISSY
(not enthused)
I'm on the edge of my seat.

SAMANTHA
Alright, everyone close your eyes.

They do so.

SAMANTHA
Bless us in our pursuit of the spirit world. Keep our circle safe from those who promote evil and seek to harm.

A moment of silence.

SAMANTHA
Dear Johnny, we know you were just a kid when you died and we want to find out why.

TEENY
(deep scary voice)
I'm heeeeeeere.

Roberta elbows her.

TEENY
Ouch.

SAMANTHA
Concentrate.

A strong WIND BLOWS and dead leaves tumble across the cemetery. LIGHTNING flickers in the distance as a SUMMER STORM heads their way.

SAMANTHA
Can you hear us Johnny? If you can hear me, let us know. Give us a sign. It's okay. We just want to talk to you. Tell us how you died.

Distant THUNDER as the storm blows nearer.

CHRISSY
(scared)
He's here.

Teeny, Roberta and Samantha open their eyes and look at Chrissy. She's not the type to put these guys on.

Chrissy's eyes remain tightly shut. She rocks back and forth, rhythmically.

CHRISSY
He wants to tell us his story.

SAMANTHA
Chrissy?

Roberta breaks the circle.

ROBERTA
Let's stop.

Samantha grabs Roberta's hand back.

CHRISSY
He's afraid.

SAMANTHA
Tell him not to be scared. It's okay.

CHRISSY
He's all by himself. He's lonely.
He needs a friend.

Chrissy CRIES as the sky THUNDERS. Roberta and Teeny simultaneously break the circle, scared.

ROBERTA
Holy shit.

Chrissy's cries turn into the GIGGLES.

CHRISSY
Gotcha.

Roberta, pissed, punches Chrissy in the arm.

CHRISSY
Hey, that hurt.

ROBERTA
You deserve it, fart ass.

SAMANTHA
Don't ever do that again.

CHRISSY
I'm sorry, but you guys are so gullible when it comes to this stuff. I mean, it's all just pretend. Right?

CRACK! A deafening EXPLOSION electrifies the sky as a bolt of lightening hits a nearby tree. The girls SCREAM.

ROBERTA
Let's get outta here!

Tiny rain drops SPRINKLE down.

SAMANTHA
Where's Chrissy?

They look around and spot Chrissy hauling ass out of the cemetery.

ROBERTA
Somebody should stop her before she has a heart attack.

Rain begins to fall. Roberta grabs Teeny.

ROBERTA
Come on.

Roberta and Teeny take off after Chrissy.

SAMANTHA
I'm right behind you.

Samantha gathers the candles and tosses them into a back pack. An eerie SONG plays and suddenly very cold, Samantha shivers. She feels someone's presence and startled, turns around quickly. No one's there.

Spooked, Samantha quickly hurries after her friends.

SAMANTHA
Hey, wait up.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - MOMENTS LATER

The rain subsides and the gang walks home. Chrissy takes great care in avoiding every water puddle in her path. Roberta intentionally jumps into every water puddle in her path.

CHRISSY
Roberta, why can't you act like a girl?

ROBERTA
You got me.

Roberta defiantly jumps into another puddle, sending a few SPOTS OF MUD splashing onto Chrissy's shirt. Chrissy GASPS.

CHRISSY
Now, look what you've done.

ROBERTA
What?

Chrissy frantically attempts to SCRATCH off the spot.

CHRISSY
You know how much I hate to get dirty.

Roberta looks at the minimal damage.

ROBERTA
Ah, that's nothin'.

Samantha and Teeny lag behind. As they walk, Samantha kicks her leg up and boots Teeny in the behind. Teeny returns the favor.

TEENY
Barf breath.

Samantha boots Teeny again.

SAMANTHA
Larva lips.

As they turn the corner everyone stops, frozen in their tracks. WE HEAR a high pitched, rhythmic SQUEAK... SQUEAK... SQUEAK.

SAMANTHA
(whispers)
It's Crazy Pete.

The girls forget to breath when they finally see --

CRAZY PETE, a very scary looking old man who rides a battered bicycle down the street. His face drawn and remarkably thin. He looks like a human skeleton.

Crazy Pete doesn't notice the girls and that's just how they want to keep it. After he turns the corner and rides the SQUEAKING bicycle out of sight --

THE GIRLS breathe a sigh of relief. WE REALIZE they're genuinely afraid of this man.

SAMANTHA
Let's cut through the field.

EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Lit by the BLUE GLOW of a bright full moon, the girls walk

through a field of WAIST HIGH GRASS.

ROBERTA
Why do you think Crazy Pete only comes out at night?

CHRISSY
(a simple explanation)
Because he's crazy.

SAMANTHA
Maybe he's a vampire.

The girls all look to Samantha.

SAMANTHA
(with eloquence)
He lives in a world of darkness because the sunlight could burn a hole right through to his immortal soul. The blood that runs through his veins is the blood of all the children he's sucked the life out of. Young blood is what he's looking for. It keeps him eternal.

They girls exchange a frightened look.

TEENY
(considering it)
That's a logical explanation.

They all pick up the pace and walk out of the field, finding themselves on the back side of the --

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - SAME

Before they go their separate ways:

CHRISSY
Will someone walk me home?

SAMANTHA
You're two blocks out of the way.

CHRISSY
But I'm scared of Crazy Pete.

TEENY
He's probably half way across town by now.

Chrissy knows Roberta's her last chance. She looks at her with pleading eyes.

CHRISSY
Pleeeeeease.

ROBERTA
Alright.

SAMANTHA
See you guys tomorrow.

They split up. Roberta walks with Chrissy. Samantha heads to her house and Teeny walks alone toward hers.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - MORNING

Fathers leave for work and mothers wave goodbye as they begin another day.

INT. SAMANTHA'S KITCHEN - SAME

Trix for everyone as Samantha eats breakfast with her mother and sister. She glances at her father's empty chair. Angela catches the look.

ANGELA
Where's my daddy?

MRS. ALBERTSON
I told you honey, he had to go away for a little while, but you can visit him really soon.

SAMANTHA
(sarcastic)
Every other weekend and holidays?

Mrs. Albertson gives Samantha a look as Angela innocently eats her breakfast.

ANGELA
But I want to see him now.

MRS. ALBERTSON
I wish you could honey, but you can't.

She stands and clears the table. Angela, too young to remotely understand the situation, looks sad. Samantha attempts to cheer her up.

SAMANTHA
(to Angela)
Hey, Angela I saw crazy Pete yesterday.

A frightened and curious look comes over Angela's face.

MRS. ALBERTSON
You kids leave that poor man alone. Do you hear me?

Samantha looks at her mother, who wears another hot pants

outfit.

SAMANTHA
Why are you dressed like that, anyway?

MRS. ALBERTSON
Like what?

SAMANTHA
Like... that. It's embarrassing.

Mrs. Albertson looks down at her outfit as Samantha gets up from the table and stomps out of the room. WE HEAR the screen door SLAM shut.

EXT. STREET CORNER - MORNING

Roberta rides up on her bike and skids to a stop next to a telephone pole. She ties a helium balloon to the pole, tacks up a sign then rides away.

SIGN -- CARNIVAL
TODAY AT NOON
REFRESHMENTS
112 OAKVIEW DRIVE

The Wormers ride up on their bikes. Scott rips down the sign. Reads.

SCOTT
This could be fun.

BANG! He pops the balloon.

EXT. TEENY'S HOUSE - NOON

A colorful bouquet of balloons are tied to the gas lamp post, in the front yard.

EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

More balloons.

CHRISSY charges the neighborhood kids a nickel each as they walk through the side gate.

ROBERTA mans the lemonade stand for another nickel a pop.

CUE UP: "COME AND GET YOUR LOVE" by Redbone as WE PAN over to where most of the action is --

TEENY charges a quarter a pop in the kissing booth. Her BOOBS are exceptionally HUGE today.

A long line of boys wait their turn as the first boy in line hands Teeny a quarter. She drops the money into a jar, grabs

the boy by the collar and plants a kiss on him.

He walks away with a big grin on his face.

Teeny looks down and notices her right BOOB-OF-THE-DAY has slipped down to her waist. She quickly turns away from the line and PULLS it back into place. She turns back to the boys and --

TEENY
Next.

Another boy hands Teeny a quarter and gets his money's worth when she delivers a lingering kiss.

Several boys in line, including BRETT JONES (the cute boy from red rover) start to get antsy as they wait their turn.

ANOTHER ANGLE

With a king size sheet draped over it, the swing set has become a gypsy fortune teller's tent. The sign outside reads: FORTUNES TOLD .25 cents.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

Samantha, towel wrapped around her head like a turban, sits at a small table. MORTON, a nerdy kid, sits across from her. They stare into a crystal ball as Samantha caresses it lightly. She speaks like a SOOTH SAYER:

SAMANTHA
There are clouds. A thick fog rolling in from your future. It's difficult to read. Relax Morton. Let your mind wander.

Morton attempts to do this. His body goes limp. He looks like an idiot.

SAMANTHA
The clouds are clearing. I'm beginning to see... fascinating... veeeeery interesting.

MORTON
What?

SAMANTHA
A colorful ray of sun beaming down into your heart. Romance prospers for you.

He tries to look into the ball but only sees clear glass.

MORTON
It does?

SAMANTHA
Morton, I see a girl in your future.

MORTON
Who is it?

SAMANTHA
I probably shouldn't say. Why tempt fate?

MORTON
Come on Samantha. Who is it?

SAMANTHA
Well, if you insist. It's Chrissy.

MORTON
Chrissy Dewitt? Really?

SAMANTHA
Yeah, but don't say I said anything, alright?

Morton immediately acquires a new found confidence.

MORTON
You bet. What else do you see?

Samantha looks into the crystal ball. AHHHHHHHHHH! A horrifying SCREAM emanates from outside the tent. Morton jumps up and knocks over the table.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Samantha pops out of the tent and surveys the scene as --

Kids run for cover as the automatic sprinkler system sprays water across the yard. Chrissy is shoved aside as kids run past her.

Teeny, now kissing Brett Jones, is drenched by the water but doesn't break away from him.

Roberta spots the Wormers, huddled next to the sprinkler switch, appreciating the laugh. Scott waves to her.

SCOTT
Hi Roberta.

ROBERTA
You're dead, Wormer!

She takes off toward him, but slips and falls on her ass.

SCOTT
Ouch.

Teeny, still entranced in her lip lock with Brett, doesn't bother to come up for air.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Samantha, Angela and their mother watch television. Samantha glances over at an empty Lazy Boy. Dad's chair. KNOCK KNOCK.

GRANDMA (O.S.)
Hello. Anybody home?

The look on Mrs. Albertson's face is one of sheer terror.

MRS. ALBERTSON
Nobody move.

SAMANTHA
It's just Grandma.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
My mother's soon to be ex mother-in-law. She wasn't the cookies and milk type at all. She was more like the Jim Beam and soda type.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Samantha's seventy year old GRANDMA ALBERTSON, RASPY VOICED and cantankerous, peeks into the garage door windows. She on a mission and it reads on her face.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angela tries to jump off the couch --

ANGELA
Mamma.

Mrs. Albertson pulls her daughter back.

MRS. ALBERTSON
Shhh.

SAMANTHA
What's going on?

MRS. ALBERTSON
(whispers)
Your Grandma's upset because your father moved out.

SAMANTHA
So let her go yell at him.

MRS. ALBERTSON
She's not mad at him, she's mad at me.

SAMANTHA
Why? He's the one that left.

MRS. ALBERTSON
She doesn't understand that.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Grandma pounds on the door.

GRANDMA (O.S.)
I know you're in there. I saw your car in the garage.

MRS. ALBERTSON
(panicked)
Hide!

SAMANTHA
What?

AT THE WINDOW - Grandma's shadow moves into view as she tries to peak in.

MRS. ALBERTSON
Please.

SAMANTHA
You're kidding, right?

Mrs. Albertson grabs Angela and dives behind the couch.

MRS. ALBERTSON
(pleading to Samantha)
I can't handle your Grandmother right now.

SAMANTHA
I hate this!

MRS. ALBERTSON
(anguished)
It isn't my fault.

Finally, Samantha reluctantly scoots down behind the Lazy Boy just as Grandma peeks in the window.

GRANDMA
Think about those two little girls you've got in there.

She BANGS on the window.

GRANDMA
I think you owe it to yourself and the girls to go to him. Try and get him to come back. It's your duty. Do you understand?
(BANGING again)
I know you're in there.

Angela, frightened, begins to cry. Her mother tries to comfort and shush her.

Samantha, filled up with the torment, closes her eyes and covers her ears.

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK. The wind up, alarm clock reads 12 o'clock. Midnight. Samantha stirs, enduring a restless sleep.

The familiar EERIE MUSIC plays in the distance. It grows louder, nearer. Builds to a crescendo as the bedroom CURTAINS BILLOW and a GUST OF WIND bursts into the room.

The telescope swivels.

Samantha shivers in her sleep as the room suddenly gets cold.

Her gerbil's go crazy in their habitrail. They run around like mad, SCREECHING and SQUEALING.

Samantha stirs then opens her eyes to find --

SPOOKY SHADOWS dancing on the wall. A GIANT SHADOW resembling a GHOSTLY SILHOUETTE moves across the room toward Samantha. It seems to hover over her, eerily.

Samantha pulls the covers up to her face, leaving only her frightened eyes to peek out.

Finally, the MUSIC fades away as the wind dies down and the curtains fall still.

INT. ROBERTA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Roberta lies asleep in her bed. A circle of light shines on her face. It turns off and on. It's coming in through the window. Roberta wakes up, rubs her eyes and notices the light.

She immediately grabs a flashlight from under her bed and hurries to her bedroom window.

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Samantha looks out her window, and waits. Across her backyard WE SEE the signal of Roberta's flashlight.

INT. ROBERTA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roberta, opens her bedroom window. She reaches up and yanks on a string affixed to the window sill.

EXT. ROBERTA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

WE FOLLOW the string up to a tree, across to a light pole then

down to a house.

EXT. TEENY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DING. The string yanks on a bell, attached to the window sill. DING.

INT. TEENY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DING. DING. Teeny wakes at the sound of the bell. She pushes Buddy off her feet and groggily climbs out of bed. She opens her bedroom window and tugs on the string, signaling she got the message.

Teeny rubs her eyes and sits down at her desk. She scribbles a note.

Buddy sits at her feet, still half asleep. Teeny folds the note and tucks it under his collar.

TEENY
Okay Buddy, go get Chrissy.

He WHIMPERS and lays down. Teeny stands at her window and motions for him to jump out.

TEENY
Come on.

He WHINES.

TEENY
You know the routine.

Buddy reluctantly jumps out the window.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - CONTINUOUS

Buddy runs across the front yards of several houses.

EXT. DEWITT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Buddy trots up the front walk. Darts from window to window. They're all closed.

He dashes around the side of the house, finally spots an open window and leaps inside.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Buddy CRASHES to the floor, knocking over a clothes hamper. He stops in his tracks. Listens. Quiet. He creeps out of the bathroom.

INT. CHRISSY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chrissy sleeps soundly, until Buddy jumps up on her bed and

licks her face. She awakes with a start as Buddy licks her mouth.

CHRISSY
Oooo. Worm breath.

She grabs the note, pushes Buddy off the bed, flips on the light and reads. In a split second, Chrissy hops out of bed. She pulls on her pink house coat and bunny slippers.

CHRISSY
Let's go Buddy.

Buddy follows Chrissy out the window.

EXT. DRIVE IN - MOMENTS LATER

The secret meeting place. Behind the Gaslight Addition, WE FIND the Skyline Drive-in. Prime. You don't see these anymore. It's two in the morning and the place is abandoned for the night.

The girls are silhouetted against the GIANT WHITE SCREEN as they walk back and forth on the wooden plank at its base.

SAMANTHA
I thought I saw someone in the cemetery the night of the seance but I wasn't sure... until tonight when he came into my bedroom.

TEENY
Who?

SAMANTHA
Dear Johnny.

CHRISSY
Give me a break.

SAMANTHA
(hooking them)
It wasn't like he was a person, but his presence was apparent. He came in through the window and instantly filled up the room. He was everywhere all at once.

A chill runs up her spine.

SAMANTHA
I could feel his icy breath on my neck.

They all look at her, being reeled in by her persuasive tone.

SAMANTHA
I felt like he wanted to grab me but he didn't know how.

TEENY
It's him. It has to be.

CHRISSY
Oh, come on you guys, this is ridiculous.

ROBERTA
Why?

CHRISSY
Because, the seances were just for fun. None of us actually believed we could bring someone back from the dead.

TEENY
I did.

CHRISSY
Why am I not surprised? You think Marilyn Monroe's your guardian angel.

TEENY
She is, so shut up bacteria breath.

CHRISSY
You shut up, butt brain.

ROBERTA
I believed too.

CHRISSY
It was lightning. That's all.

ROBERTA
Then why did you haul ass out of the cemetery like you'd seen a ghost?

SAMANTHA
We have to go back there.

CHRISSY
(hopeful)
Tomorrow right?

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Wrong. Samantha shines the way with her flashlight as the girls walk through the cemetery. It's late. It's scary.

CHRISSY
We shouldn't be out here this late. I mean, what do you expect to find?

TEENY
We're just checking it out.

A Hoot Owl BELLOWS and the girls slow their pace, continually look around, as if they expect the Boogie Man to jump out from behind a tombstone at any minute.

CHRISSY
Let's go home.

SAMANTHA
We're almost there.

They move onward until Samantha trips over something lying on the ground. She lands flat on her face, in the dark.

SAMANTHA
What the --

Teeny picks up the flashlight and shines it down on Samantha, who's face is right next to --

DEAR JOHNNY'S TOMBSTONE which is laying flat on the ground, CRACKED DOWN THE MIDDLE.

Samantha, startled by the sight, quickly climbs to her feet and they all stare down at Dear Johnny's grave.

ROBERTA
Son of a bitch.

TEENY
(amazed)
We did it. We actually friggin' did it!

SAMANTHA
He's back... and we brought him here.

WE HEAR an enormous WHOOSH as the HOOT OWL swoops down over their heads. Chrissy SCREAMS and on her cue they all take off running.

INT. ROBERTA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Roberta pulls a rosary out of her dresser and hangs it on the bed post before calling it a night.

INT. TEENY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Teeny lays in bed and looks, nervously, around her room. Her closet door is open and her clothes look like people, lurking in the dark. Teeny hops out of bed and slams the closet door shut.

INT. CHRISSY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chrissy turns off the light and slips into bed. A moment later, she turns the light back on, crawls out of bed and onto the floor. She cautiously lifts her comforter and peeks under the bed. All clear.

Chrissy climbs back into bed, but this time, she leaves the light on. For someone who doesn't believe in ghosts, she's sure got the spooks.

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Samantha lays in bed and watches the silhouetted shadows dancing on her wall. She pulls the covers up over her head.

EXT. SHELBYVILLE - MORNING

A new day as the girls ride up to the library on their bikes. As usual, Chrissy brings up the rear.

INT. LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

The girls enter and head straight for the reference desk. The LIBRARIAN looks up. Smiles.

LIBRARIAN
What can I do for you girls?

SAMANTHA
Where would we find information on people who died in the forties?

LIBRARIAN
Local people?

SAMANTHA
Yes ma'am.

LIBRARIAN
Well, normally you could look up the newspaper obituaries in the basement, but I'm sorry to say everything before forty-eight was lost in the big fire.

SAMANTHA
(disappointed)
Everything?

LIBRARIAN
Sorry.

The girls turn to leave.

LIBRARIAN
You know, you might be able to find what you're looking for at the Greenfield library.

SAMANTHA
Greenfield?

LIBRARIAN
They keep copies of all the county papers.

SAMANTHA
Thanks a lot.

The girls walk toward the exit.

CHRISSY
Well, that settles that.

SAMANTHA
What settles what?

CHRISSY
We can't ride our bikes all the way to Greenfield.
(dreading her response)
Can we?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATE MORNING

A deserted, country lane, lined with large maple trees on both sides. The girls ride their bikes down the center of the road and pass a SIGN - Greenfield 9 miles

As they cruise along, Teeny BELTS OUT, with a unique Diana Ross flair, her rendition of "AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH."

TEENY
(singing)
And if you should miss my lovin'
One of these old days.
If you should ever miss the arms that used to hold you so close.
Or the lips that used to touch yours so tenderly.
(building)
Just remember what I told you the day I set you free.

SAMANTHA
Bring it home, sister.

TEENY
(giving it her all)
Ain't no mountain high enough. Ow!
Ain't no valley low enough. Ow!
No river wide enough.
Nothin' can keep me.
Keep me from yoooou...

They ride over a hill and out of sight, Teeny's crooning voice drifting off into the horizon.

EXT. UNCLE BEANS CORNER STORE - NOON

A general store five miles from anywhere. Four bikes are parked in front. A nearby ROAD SIGN: Greenfield 5 miles

INT. CORNER STORE - CONTINUOUS

You can buy anything from a snow blower to a hot dog here. Samantha grabs four sodas and sets them on the counter.

CLERK
That's eighty cents.

She hands him a dollar bill and waits for change.

EXT. ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Lunchtime. Chrissy, Teeny and Roberta sit at a picnic table and unpack a knapsack. Sandwiches, candy bars and chips. Chrissy chows down.

TEENY
Truth or dare Roberta?

ROBERTA
Truth.

TEENY
How big are your boobs now?

ROBERTA
Drop dead.

Samantha approaches and hands out the sodas. She gives Chrissy the change and she quickly counts it then deposits it back into the "tree house money" coffee can. Everyone eats.

TEENY
She has to say, doesn't she Sam?

SAMANTHA
Say what?

TEENY
It's truth or dare and I asked Roberta how big her boobs are.

Samantha exchanges glances with Roberta, who embarrassed, looks down at the table. It's apparent the boob thing is a real issue with her.

SAMANTHA
She doesn't have to say if she doesn't want to.

TEENY
Well, then... can we see 'em?

ROBERTA
No, you can't see them.

CHRISSY
Weirdo.

TEENY
(confessing)
I don't have any real one's yet.

ROBERTA
You'll get them and you'll hate them.

TEENY
You're lucky Roberta. Men love 'em when they're big.

Teeny sticks her chest out, modeling today's falsie job.

TEENY
Look how big mine are today.

They all survey her breasts.

SAMANTHA
(impressed)
They almost look real.

Teeny proudly reaches into her shirt and pulls out a balloon.

TEENY
It's filled with pudding.

SAMANTHA
Pudding?

TEENY
The Wormers actually gave me the idea, but jello was too jiggly. Pudding has a heavier more realistic texture.

She hands the balloon to Samantha who holds it in her hand, testing its weight.

SAMANTHA
I think you may have finally got it.

She hands the balloon back and Teeny stuffs it back into her brazier.

CHRISSY
What flavor is it?

TEENY
Vanilla.

ROBERTA
Why do guys like big tits?

Samantha thinks about this.

SAMANTHA
I don't know.

TEENY
My mom's got big ones, so eventually I'll probably have my own big ones too.

Chrissy finishes off a Three Musketeers bar. Roberta notices.

ROBERTA
Hey, you just ate my candy bar.

CHRISSY
Sorry.

ROBERTA
(to Sam & Teeny)
Can I have five cents of the tree house money to buy another candy bar?

SAMANTHA
You have to ask Chrissy. She's the banker.

ROBERTA
(to Chrissy)
Well? Hand it over.

CHRISSY
No. Thanks to the Wormers we only made six dollars at the carnival.

TEENY
Five of which you can thank me for.

CHRISSY
The less we spend, the quicker we get the tree house.

ROBERTA
I don't believe this.

TEENY
Chrissy, truth or dare?

CHRISSY
I don't want to play.

ROBERTA
Truth or dare?!

CHRISSY
(reluctantly yielding)
Truth.

TEENY
Have you ever been french kissed?

CHRISSY
Are you kidding? I don't want to get pregnant.

ROBERTA
You can't get pregnant from kissing.

CHRISSY
I know that beetle brain. But, it's common knowledge, if you tongue kiss a boy, he automatically thinks you'll do the deed with him. They can't help it. They're driven. It's the male curse.

ROBERTA
The deed?

SAMANTHA
(egging her on)
What deed would that be?

CHRISSY
(embarrassed)
You know. Planting the seed and watering the flower.

TEENY
What flower?

CHRISSY
The flower a woman grows when she's about to make a baby with her husband.

They give her a confused look.

CHRISSY
Isn't that how it works? The man uses his watering can and sprinkles it on the flower?

Laughter from the others.

CHRISSY
Well, if that's not what happens then how does it work?

Roberta leans over and whispers to Chrissy.

As she listens intently her eyes go wide and a horrified look comes across Chrissy's face.

CHRISSY
(disbelief and shock)
He sticks it in?!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AFTERNOON

The girls continue their journey as they listen to a TRANSISTOR RADIO tied to Teeny's handlebars. Tony Orlando and Dawn's "KNOCK THREE TIMES" plays.

ON RADIO
Hey girl watcha doin' down there?
Dancin' alone every night when I
live up above...

The song continues and they all join in WHEN --

ALL
Oh my darlin' KNOCK THREE TIMES
on the ceiling if you want me.
Twice on the pipe --
(Chrissy DINGS her bike bell twice)
-- if the answer is noooo.

In the distance, a SQUAWKING sound grows louder. Samantha stops her bike.

SAMANTHA
Listen.

Everyone brakes.

SAMANTHA
(to Teeny)
Turn that off.

Teeny switches off the radio and we are overwhelmed by the sound of a thousand screaming birds.

ROBERTA
Where are they?

SAMANTHA
In there.

Across the road, A CORN FIELD stretches for as far as the eye can see. The stalks are six feet high. No birds are visible but the sound is incredibly loud.

TEENY
There must be a thousand of them.

She climbs off her bike, picks up a stick and tosses it into --

SAMANTHA
Don't!

Too late. The stick goes flying. As it lands in the corn field, a hundred blackbirds flap their wings and take flight.

The sky becomes a MOVING BLACK CLOUD.

The girls watch in amazement until --

PLOP

Bird poop lands on Teeny's bicycle seat and Roberta LAUGHS.

PLOP
PLOP
PLOP

It's everywhere and suddenly not so funny.

SAMANTHA
Let's get out of here!

Teeny jumps on her bike and they all tear down the road, away from the moving black cloud.

The SQUAWKING'S almost unbearable as it rains bird shit.

Chrissy freaks out. When she realizes she's been hit, she bursts into tears.

CHRISSY
Groooooooss!

She loses it as they all ride toward an old, covered bridge.

INT. COVERED BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

They enter the bridge and wait for the flock to pass over them. Chrissy, completely repulsed, SOBS hysterically. Roberta attempts to calm her down.

ROBERTA
Chrissy it's okay. It's only bird shit.

Chrissy calms herself and stops crying for a moment. Then she looks down at her dirty clothes and goes nuts again.

SAMANTHA
(to Teeny)
Real smart, Teeny.

TEENY
I didn't know.

SAMANTHA
Next time think. You don't always have to be the center of attention, you know?

Teeny looks at the ground, rejection waves heavily on her.

TEENY
I'm sorry.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

The birds pass over and out of sight.

INT. COVERED BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Samantha looks outside.

SAMANTHA
They're gone.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Teeny and Samantha, fully dressed, stand on a small cliff. Below them, a sparkling, fresh water stream. Samantha jumps. Teeny follows.

SPLASH! They dive into the water, pop their heads up and stand, the water up to their waists.

TEENY
Are you still mad at me?

Samantha ponders the question then smiles.

SAMANTHA
Teeny, even if I try, I can't stay mad at you.

Teeny's all smiles. She splashes Samantha. Samantha returns the favor.

CHRISSY (O.S.)
Wooooooooooooooooooo!

Chrissy slides down the hill on her butt. Ouch. She lands in the water with a splash. Samantha and Teeny applaud as Chrissy pops her head up. She stands in the water and takes a bow.

ROBERTA (O.S.)
Lookout beloooow!

The girls look up to see --

Roberta standing on the ledge of the bridge, ready to jump. It's a twenty foot dive into waist high water.

SAMANTHA
Roberta don't. It's too shallow.

ROBERTA
Bombs away.

She dives off the side of the bridge and disappears into the water. The girls watch for her to come up for air, but she doesn't pop out of the water.

SAMANTHA
Where is she?

Teeny dives under the water. Chrissy panics.

CHRISSY
Roberta?!

Samantha dives under as Teeny comes up for air.

CHRISSY'S POV. - Down stream, Roberta floats toward the shoreline, her face in the water.

BACK TO SCENE

CHRISSY
No!

Teeny grabs Samantha and they swim as fast as they can toward Roberta. Chrissy follows, but as always lags way behind.

Teeny and Samantha grab Roberta, drag her out of the water and onto the shore. Samantha puts her ear to Roberta's mouth.

SAMANTHA
She's not breathing.

TEENY
Somebody's got to give her mouth to mouth.

SAMANTHA
I'll do CPR. You do mouth to mouth.

TEENY
Other way around.

Chrissy finally reaches them.

CHRISSY
Out of the way.

She takes charge and shoves Samantha and Teeny aside. When she bends down to start mouth to mouth resuscitation --

Squirt. Roberta spits a mouth full of water into her face.

ROBERTA
I'm touched.

She was faking the entire time. Everyone falls back, relieved.

ROBERTA
(to Samantha and Teeny)
It's good to know who your true friends are.

TEENY
Hey, I was gonna do it.

SAMANTHA
Me too.

ROBERTA
Yeah, right.

Roberta swings her arm around Chrissy.

ROBERTA
Chrissy here's the only one who --

Chrissy draws her fist back and POW! She socks Roberta in the eye.

CHRISSY
Don't you ever do anything like that again. Ever!

They're all momentarily stunned. Violence is not one of Chrissy's character traits.

ROBERTA
It was just a joke.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
That wasn't the first time Roberta faked her own death. Earlier that year, during a slumber party at Teeny's house, she held her breath until she passed out. And the year before, she scared the hell out of us when she jumped off the roof and pretended she broke her neck.

WE HEAR a SPLASH!

TEENY
What was that?

WE HEAR VOICES and LAUGHTER coming from around the river bend. Samantha and Teeny check it out. Roberta and Chrissy stay behind.

ROBERTA
I'm sorry.

Chrissy pouts.

ROBERTA
Look, if it means anything, I really appreciate that you would've done the mouth to mouth thing.

CHRISSY
You scared me to death.

ROBERTA
I'm sorry.

CHRISSY
You're my best friend, Roberta.

It's a moment. Roberta smiles, embarrassed.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Change is inevitable so we all look for constants. The four of us had each other but Chrissy and Roberta found something deeper that day... and both understood.

Roberta makes a fist.

ROBERTA
Helluva right hook you've got there.

CHRISSY
Don't swear.

TEENY (O.S.)
(quietly)
You guys, come here.

Roberta and Chrissy join Samantha and Teeny. They peak over the top of a ridge. Chrissy GASPS.

GIRLS POV. - The Wormers skinny dip in the river. Buck naked, Scott climbs out onto a tree branch and dives into the water. WE SEE a lot of WHITE BUTTS as the brothers roughhouse.

BACK TO SCENE

The girls duck down behind the hill.

TEENY
Oh. My. God. I saw his penis.

SAMANTHA & ROBERTA
Whose?

CHRISSY
(reprimanding)
You guys.

TEENY
And the balls.

SAMANTHA & ROBERTA
Whose?

TEENY
Scott's.

Samantha and Roberta peak back over the ledge and stare WIDE EYED at Scott's penis. They duck back down behind the hill.

SAMANTHA & ROBERTA
Oh, my God!

CHRISSY
Great, now I'm the only one who hasn't seen Scott's thing.

ROBERTA
So?

CHRISSY
I know you guys. It'll be the topic of conversation for the rest of the summer. You're forcing me to look.

SAMANTHA
Nobody's forcing you to do anything.

CHRISSY
Okay, I'll look. But, I want to make it clear, I'm looking under protest.

TEENY
Yeah, right.

Chrissy peaks over the hill and stares with a blank look on her face that doesn't change. The others look at her curiously as she climbs back down, unfazed.

CHRISSY
It's not very big.

The other girls bust up laughing.

CHRISSY
What's so funny?

ROBERT
It's only big when the guy has a hard on.

TEENY
I walked in on my dad in the bathroom once and I think he must have had, you know, a hard on because his thing was like --
(gesturing two feet)
-- this big.

ROBERTA
They don't get that big.

TEENY
Oh, yes they do.

SAMANTHA
(repulsed)
Your dad?

TEENY
I know. It was gross.

SAMANTHA
I saw my dad's balls once. Talk about gross. Once you get older, they hang down like cow utters.

TEENY & ROBERTA
Gross.

CHRISSY
What's a hard on?

They all give her looks.

SAMANTHA
Doesn't your mother tell you anything?

CHRISSY
(distressed)
I'm beginning to think she's been misinformed.

Roberta's gaze shifts toward A PILE OF CLOTHES hanging in the bushes across the way.

Roberta nudges Samantha, who nudges Teeny, who nudges Chrissy. They all have the same idea and smile simultaneously.

ROBERTA
Let's do it.

Roberta sneaks toward the Wormers clothes. Her friends follow suit.

SAMANTHA
Get ready to make a mad dash for the bikes.

ROBERTA
(to Chrissy)
You better start now.

CHRISSY
Buzz off hog head.

ROBERTA
I'm serious. Get going.

Chrissy gives in and heads toward the covered bridge.

TEENY
This is too easy.

They stand at the edge of the cliff and call down to the boys.

ROBERTA
Hey, Wormers.

The boys look up.

ROBERTA
It's pay back time.

Roberta waves a pile of clothes.

ROBERTA
Come and get 'em suckers.

SCOTT
You better put those down.

ROBERTA
Dream on, asshole!

Covering their privates, the Wormers rip out of the water and make a mad dash for the girls.

SAMANTHA
Shit.

The girls run to their bikes, clothes in tow. The chase is on, across a meadow toward the covered bridge. The girls reach their bikes as a car approaches.

The Wormers duck behind an assortment of trees and bushes.

Scott peeks out from behind a tree, suddenly very vulnerable.

SCOTT
Come on, jokes over, huh?

ROBERTA
Wrong!

The girls hop on their bikes and start down the road.

WORMER #2
Please give us our clothes back.

CHRISSY
Come and get 'em, nimrods.

As the girls peddle toward the home stretch of their journey, they drop an item of clothing about every fifty feet.

The Wormers dart from trees to bushes as they hide from passing cars and gather their clothes.

The girls HOOT and HOLLER, enjoying the show.

ROBERTA
(ecstatic)
All for one and one for all!

The join hands and ride side by side down the road.

EXT. GREENFIELD LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

Establishing shot.

INT. LIBRARY BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

It's dimly lit and musty. The girls sit at a large table and flip through pages of old newspaper headlines, now hard bound for quick reference. Chrissy SNEEZES.

CHRISSY
I think I'm allergic to dust.

Roberta SLAMS shut a book. Dust scatters and Chrissy SNEEZES again.

CHRISSY
Thanks.

Roberta scoots the book aside.

ROBERTA
Nothing happened in April.

TEENY
Nothing ever happens in Shelbyville.

CHRISSY
I kind of like it that way.

Roberta stands and reviews the shelves of hard bound newspapers. Samantha reaches the end of her book and closes it.

SAMANTHA
Nothin'.
(to Teeny)
What month is that?

TEENY
May.

Roberta brings a book back to the table, sits down and flips through the newspaper articles. She stares at an article.

ANGLE ON: A 1962 PHOTO AND HEADLINE... LOCAL TEACHER KILLED. A large photo shows a car smashed to hell. Beside it, there's a smaller photo. The same picture Roberta carries in her back pocket.

Roberta reads the article. Chrissy notices her and watches the look on Roberta's face change from curious to pained.

CHRISSY
What's wrong?

ROBERTA
It's my mom.

They all look at the newspaper. The picture says it all. It was a violent end.

As Roberta reads:

ROBERTA
It was a head on collision. The driver of the pick up truck fell asleep at the wheel.
(distressed)
She was pinned in the car for an hour and a half before they could get her out. She was fully conscious
(MORE)

ROBERTA (CONT.)
while rescue workers attempted her extraction from the demolished vehicle. She died during the night at Green County Hospital of massive head injuries and severe internal bleeding.

Roberta stares at the picture of the SMASHED CAR. She seems ANGUISHED and CONFUSED.

ROBERTA
I don't understand this.

CHRISSY
What do you mean?

She doesn't respond to Chrissy's question and continues to stare at the photo.

ROBERTA
It must have been awful for her.
(imagining)
A lot of pain.

Teeny swallows hard, choked up. Nobody knows what to say. Roberta looks at Samantha for reassurance.

Heavy tears fill Roberta's eyes but she fights them.

ROBERTA
(trying not to cry)
She was really beautiful, wasn't she?

TEENY
Like a movie star.

Suddenly embarrassed, Roberta tries to compose herself. She wipes her runny nose with her shirt sleeve then stands and carries the book across the room. She xeroxes a copy of the article.

Her friends watch her, wishing they knew what to say.

Roberta carefully folds the xerox and slips it into her pocket. She returns to the table.

Everyone silently continues the search for "Dear Johnny's" obituary.

As they flip through pages and pages of old newspapers Teeny quietly HUMS to herself. WE make out the tune to be the Carpenters, "CLOSE TO YOU." Without thinking, Samantha joins in the HUMMING. Soon after, Chrissy HUMS along also. Even Roberta can't resist.

SAMANTHA
Wait, I think I found something.

TEENY
Read it.

SAMANTHA
(reading)
Funeral services will be held on Saturday for 12 year old Jonathan Simms and his mother 36 year old Beverly Anne Simms. Services begin at noon at the third street Presbyterian Church. The grieving husband and father asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be given to the church. Due to the unexpected and tragic circumstances involving the deaths, the family has asked that the services remain private and...

Samantha turns the page, looking for more.

SAMANTHA
(surprised)
That's it.

TEENY
What do you mean, that's it? How did they die?

Samantha flips a few pages forward.

SAMANTHA
Wait a minute. The book skips from June 12 to June 16th. Four pages are missing.

Samantha opens the book as wide as possible, revealing --

SAMANTHA
They've been torn out.
(reeling them in)
Somebody has gone to a lot of trouble to keep Dear Johnny's death a mystery.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

The girls tackle the long ride home. Roberta, still a little emotionally removed, leads the pack, a few yards ahead of the others.

TEENY
I wonder how they died.

SAMANTHA
I think we need to be very cautious about who we talk about this with.

CHRISSY
Why?

SAMANTHA
Because it's entirely possible that whoever ripped those pages out of the library in Greenfeild started the fire at the Shelbyville library.

CHRISSY
(skeptical)
We don't know that.

SAMANTHA
No, we don't. But it's more than a little coincidental, don't you think?

Teeny feeds off of Samantha's notion.

TEENY
I saw something like this in a movie once. This lady went away on a trip and when she came back she found out her husband had killed himself. But the lady didn't believe he would do that, so she decided to look for the killer... and when she got too close.
(gestures cutting her throat)
He slit her open from ear to ear.

Chrissy's eyes go wide.

SAMANTHA
(a stern warning)
We really don't know who or what we're dealing with here and we need to be very careful.

The others silently agree.

As WE CUT TO the following series of shots:

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Shelbyville, Indiana was not the most <u>exciting</u> place to grow up. In fact, the most common cause of death before puberty was boredom. Our quest for the tree house was all we had to look forward to that summer... until we discovered the suspicious lack of details surrounding Dear Johnny's death. It was like a gift from God. A mystery only <u>we</u> could solve.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING

The sun sits low in the sky and the rolling hillsides take on a golden glow.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS

A wheat field shimmers in the wind.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS

A deer grazes in an open clover field.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS

A light fog hangs over a still pond.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The girls continue their journey home as day becomes evening. They pass another SIGN - Shelbyville 2 miles. Almost home.

They slowly gain ground on a hitchhiker. He is Private JAMES CONELLY (19), a Vietnam vet. Still wearing half his uniform, he back packs down the road, with a slight limp.

Teeny is the first to ride past him.

TEENY
Hi.

CONELLY
Hi.

She circles around and rides back to him. The other girls catch up. Curious, they size up the vet as they head down the road together. He wears an earring, pony tail and a friendly smile.

ROBERTA
Are you in the army?

CONELLY
Was.

SAMANTHA
Vietnam?

CONELLY
Was?

ROBERTA
Did you kill anyone over there?

CONELLY
Not because I wanted to.

Teeny notices his limp.

TEENY
Did you get shot?

CONELLY
You don't want to hear about that stuff.

ROBERTA
Sure we do!

SAMANTHA
Did you get a purple heart?

CONELLY
(not enthused)
Yeah.

TEENY
Can we see it?

ROBERTA
Please?

Few people have shown interest in him since he's been back and he's not sure how to handle this.

CONELLY
Uh.
(beat)
Sure, why not.

He swings off his back pack, pulls out a velvet case and opens it. The girls admire THE MEDAL.

SAMANTHA
It's exceptional.

TEENY
Really nice.

For a moment, Conelly feels like a hero.

SAMANTHA
How come you don't wear it?

ROBERTA
It's a huge honor, right?

CONELLY
(tarnished)
No.

The moment ends. Conelly closes the case and slides it back into his pack.

"MAMA TOLD ME" by Three Dog Night plays comes on Teeny's transistor radio.

CONELLY
Good song.

Teeny studies his face. He's handsome. Interesting. Older, but not too old.

Teeny pulls a Orange Crush bottle out of her bicycle basket.

TEENY
Wanna sip?

Conelly takes the soda.

CONELLY
Thanks.

He swigs then hands it back to her.

ROBERTA
It must have been awful getting shot.

CONELLY
It hurt like hell, but it was the best day of my life.

ROBERTA
What do you mean?

CONELLY
It got me a seat on a plane home.
(gravely)
There's some bad shit going on over there. Some really bad shit.

Samantha looks at him with keen interest, waiting to hear more. He offers no more, until she probes.

SAMANTHA
But we're winning, right?

CONELLY
Nobody's winning.

Conelly sits down in the grass, pulls out a cigarette and lights it. He notices the girls watching him and offers over the pack.

CONELLY
Smoke?

A moment. They realize he's treating them like adults.

SAMANTHA
(cooley)
Sure.

TEENY
Yeah.

ROBERTA
I'd love a smoke.

They climb off their bicycles and joins him in the grass. Chrissy reluctantly follows.

Samantha takes a cigarette from the pack and Conelly lights it for her. Samantha takes a drag and exhales.

SAMANTHA
Smooth.

Teeny lights up. Followed by Roberta. Conelly offers a cigarette to Chrissy who shakes her head no.

CHRISSY
Smoking stunts your growth.

Conelly looks her over and cracks a slight smile.

CONELLY
You're funny.

They pass around the Orange Crush and enjoy their smokes.

SAMANTHA
On the news they said the U.S. was really starting to gain ground over there.

CONELLY
(heated)
-- forget what you saw on the news, okay? You can't believe what you see about it, or what you read about it, or what someone tells you. Even people who have been there lie about what they've seen...
(with remorse)
... or done.

They sit in a moment of silence. Samantha takes a drag off of her cigarette. She exhales and watches the smoke rise up and fade away.

SAMANTHA
It doesn't seem like we can believe in much anymore.

The girls look at her, not understanding where this sentiment comes from.

CONELLY
No, it doesn't.

Conelly takes a long, deep drag off of his cigarette.

CONELLY
Yourself maybe, if you're lucky.

Samantha immediately feels a kinship with him. A shared sense of disappointment. After all, he's really no more than a kid himself.

SAMANTHA
Are you going to be sticking around here for awhile?

CONELLY
Nah. I try not to stick around anywhere. You know what I mean?

Genuinely having no clue:

SAMANTHA
Yeah.

ROBERTA
Sure.

TEENY
Definitely.

Conelly is different from the local yokels and makes Chrissy nervous. She really looks him over.

CHRISSY
Is that an earring you're wearing?

CONELLY
Yes.

CHRISSY
(judgmental)
You're a hippie aren't you?

CONELLY
(chuckling)
You're a trip.

CHRISSY
(holding her ground)
My mom says all hippies are sex fiends.

CONELLY
I'm going to tell you something I wish someone would have told me when I was your age.

CHRISSY
(snooty)
And what's that?

CONELLY
Your parents aren't always right.

As they enjoy their cigarettes they contemplate the statement. It's news to a twelve year old.

Chrissy looks at her Timex.

CHRISSY
It's getting late. I really think we should get going.

SAMANTHA
(reluctantly)
I guess she's right.

Samantha takes a final puff off her cigarette and puts it out.

They all stand. Conelly pulls on his back pack as the girls hop on their bikes.

SAMANTHA
(to Conelly)
So where are you off to now?

CONELLY
I'm not sure. It's a big world. A lot of places to see.

Samantha looks at him in awe.

SAMANTHA
That's really cool.

As they girls slowly take off down the road:

ALL GIRLS
Bye.

He waves goodbye as they ride ahead.

Samantha turns back to him.

SAMANTHA
Hey!

CONELLY
Yeah?

SAMANTHA
Whatever it is you're lookin' for, I hope you find it.

He smiles at her. She smiles back. A shared connection. Brief but one neither will forget. Samantha catches up with the others.

CUE UP: "WOULDN'T IT BE NICE" by the Beach Boys as --

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - EVENING

As the sun sinks behind the skyline, the gas lamp posts flicker on. The girls whiz by on their bikes. One by one, they split up and head toward their respective homes.

WE FOLLOW Samantha as she rides down the street toward home. She bikes to the top of a hill then coasts with no hands down the hill.

Free as a bird with the wind at her back.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

The wrong side of the tracks. A pocket of houses nestled in an industrial area. Couches on front porches. Peeling paint. Mean dogs. The girls ride down the street on their bikes.

TEENY
This is it.

They stop in front of run down house where a NEON SIGN flashes: SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE. The shades and shutters are closed tight. Spirits would feel very invited.

ROBERTA
Well, what are we waiting for?

CHRISSY
Do you guys really want to spend tree house money on this?

SAMANTHA
We don't have a choice, Chrissy. She's the only link we've got.

TEENY
Besides, we already took the vote. Let's go.

They park their bikes and head up the walkway. Samantha rings the doorbell and they wait. The door slowly creeks open and --

Wiladine greets them, wearing a long flowing black dress, matching gloves and head dress. The only thing she's missing is a broom.

WILADINE
Yes?

SAMANTHA
We need your help.

WILADINE
I'm a little blue today, boys.

Chrissy opens the tree house money coffee can and whips out a ten dollar bill.

CHRISSY
Will this cheer you up?

Wiladine takes the $10 and stuffs it into her breast pocket.

WILADINE
Come on in.

As they do.

CHRISSY
I can't believe we're spending ten tree house dollars on Wiladine.

INT. WILADINE'S PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

The girls are alone in a room full of spiritual symbols.

Several lit candles flicker at the bottom of an alter, the center of which is a graphic crucifixion of Christ. Above the fireplace mantle, several voo doo dolls hang by their hair. Gothic lit candelabrums are everywhere.

TEENY
They're creepy and they're kooky.
They're all together spooky.

ROBERTA
This place is weird.

CHRISSY
I bet she's a devil worshiper.

Just then, she appears in the doorway.

WILADINE
The spirits are ready for you now.

The girls exchange looks then follow her down the hall.

INT. DINING/SPIRITUAL READING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dozens of candles flame as they enter.

WILADINE
Be seated.

They sit at a round table. A Ouiji board in the center.

WILADINE
I feel a strong spiritual presence around us.

CHRISSY
For ten tree house dollars I'd feel it too.

WILADINE
Silence.

She glares devil eyes at Chrissy, who shuts up, intimidated.

WILADINE
Why are you here?

SAMANTHA
We've been contacted by a spirit.

WILADINE
You've seen this presence?

SAMANTHA
Once. I think.

TEENY
His name is Jonathan Simms.

WILADINE
I know. Please, join hands.
(as they comply)
First we must let go of all mortal thoughts. Close your eyes and lose yourself. Walk with the spirits.

Wiladine lets her head drop, then starts rolling it around.

Chrissy and Roberta look at her then each other. Roberta shrugs.

WILADINE
The spirits are here and yes they want to talk to you. Jonathan Simms, voice of the dead, what say you?

A deep, GUTTURAL MOAN ECHOES through the room. All the girls thrust open their eyes.

MAN'S VOICE
I am who you say.

ROBERTA
Shit.

WILADINE
(whispers)
Silence, while the dead speaks.

MAN'S VOICE
As you feared, I walk among the living.

SAMANTHA
What do you want from us? From me?

MAN'S VOICE
I feel -
(the voice slows down)
veeeeeeery unreeeeestfuuuul.

THUD THUD. Wiladine SMACKS the wall behind her.

MAN'S VOICE
(at warp speed)
ItiscertainImustcontact -

Chrissy stands and swings open the closet door, behind Wiladine, revealing a reel to reel TAPE PLAYER.

CHRISSY
The dead speaks, alright.

Chrissy turns off the machine. Wiladine shrugs.

WILADINE
It's a living.

SAMANTHA
We believed in you Wiladine. Thanks for nothing.

Samantha grabs the $10 from Wiladine's pocket and hands it back to Chrissy who stuffs it back into the coffee can.

Samantha stands, ready to leave, when --

WILADINE
Look, I'm sorry. Sometimes the spirits really do talk. You just have to catch 'em on a good day. Let's give it another try. On me.

Samantha sits back down.

SAMANTHA
No more bullshit Wiladine.

WILADINE
No more bullshit. I promise. Everyone rest your fingertips on the Ouiji.

The girls comply and the Ouiji which rests on a board in the center of the table.

WILADINE
Relax your mind and your bodies. Be open to his presence.

The Ouiji begins to move and the girls exchange looks. All wondering if the other is the culprit.

CHRISSY
(to Teeny)
You're doing it.

TEENY
(sincere)
I'm not. I swear.

WILADINE
Shhhhh.

Suddenly the air conditioner kicks on and the room grows cold. Icy breath as they exhale. Chrissy grabs Roberta's arm for comfort. Squeezes.

CHRISSY
I'm scared.

One letter at a time, the Ouiji spells out a message.

WILADINE
G....O....O....D....D....A

SAMANTHA
Good day.

Samantha is no longer afraid.

SAMANTHA
Dear Johnny's got a sense of humor.

The Ouiji board continues to move. It stops at "S" then "A" then "M".

WILADINE
(to Samantha)
He's connected to you.

SAMANTHA
Why?

The Ouiji continues at a heightened pace. Sporadic. Angry.

WILADINE
M.....U.....R.....D...E....

SAMANTHA
Murder.

Wiladine pulls her hands from the Ouiji.

SAMANTHA
What is it Wiladine?

She turns to them, white with fear.

WILADINE
You've stirred an angry soul. You have to help him find peace.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - MOMENTS LATER

They sit on the curb in front of Chrissy's house.

CHRISSY
She's a fake.

TEENY
She fakes some things, but that Ouiji board was for real.

SAMANTHA
One thing's for sure, she was scared.

ROBERTA
So was I.
(to Chrissy)
And so were you.

TEENY
Now what do we do?

SAMANTHA
A spirit haunts the living with a purpose. I think "Dear Johnny" wants us to find out how he died.

TEENY
You saw the Ouiji. He was murdered.

ROBERTA
(real tough)
Maybe he wants us to help him settle the score.

CHRISSY
This is getting out of hand.

SAMANTHA
We need to talk to someone who was around when "Dear Johnny" died.

TEENY
Like who?

SAMANTHA
My grandma's the oldest person I know.

EXT. STREET CORNER - LATER

Teeny, Roberta and Chrissy sit on their bikes and wait as Samantha stands in a phone booth and talks into the receiver. Finally, Samantha hangs up and exits the phone booth.

SAMANTHA
She's has her poker game this afternoon, but she says we can come tomorrow morning.

CHRISSY
Your grandma plays poker?

SAMANTHA
She likes to gamble.

ROBERTA
I promised my dad we'd paint the garage door tomorrow. That's fifteen tree house bucks.

SAMANTHA
We'll do it first thing, then we'll go to my Grandma's.

REVEREND TAYLOR, a local minister, heads up the sidewalk toward the girls.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Good afternoon girls.

GIRLS
Hi.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Staying out of trouble this summer?

CHRISSY
Of course.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Tina, I'm happy to see you.

TEENY
(suspicious)
You are?

REVEREND TAYLOR
Miss Shari tells me you haven't been to Bible School classes for the last two weeks. I've been meaning to give your mother a call. Is everything alright?

TEENY
Well...
(a liar on the spot)
well, no actually. Everything isn't alright and I don't think we should be bothering my mother right now.

REVEREND TAYLOR
What seems to be the problem?

TEENY
There is nothing I'd like more than to spend my Sunday mornings at the First Street Presbyterian but well, things have been a little troublesome at home and I feel like I'm more needed there.

REVEREND TAYLOR
What sort of trouble?

TEENY
Well, my mother's been hitting the sauce lately. Especially on the weekends, cause that's when my dad goes to visit that younger woman he sees over in Grovertown. Mom's usually really hungover on Sunday mornings. Last week she was puking her guts out and I just couldn't leave her like that. And to top it all off, the girl he's giving it to in Grovertown thinks she's pregnant and it looks like we're going to be taking her in for a while. I think my mother plans to raise the baby like one of her own. I kind of like the idea of having a younger sister.

The Reverend, at a loss for words, stands speechless for a moment.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Well, try and make it next week.

TEENY
Don't you worry, Reverend Taylor. Come hell or high water, I'll be there.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Good.

Surprising Samantha, he turns his attention to her.

REVEREND TAYLOR
(with great concern)
Aren't you the oldest Albertson girl?

SAMANTHA
Yeah.

REVEREND TAYLOR
I heard about your "situation" at home.

Samantha's heart drops.

REVEREND TAYLOR
If you want to talk to someone, my door's always open.

SAMANTHA
(embarrassed)
Thanks.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Well, if there's anything I can do.

Samantha forces a nod and smile as he moves on and the girls look at her curiously.

TEENY
What was he talking about?

SAMANTHA
Nothing.

CHRISSY
Come on. Fess up.

SAMANTHA
(pissed)
I said nothing!

Roberta eases the tension by changing the subject.

CHRISSY
Your mother will be thrilled to hear she's become an alcoholic and your dad is having an affair.

TEENY
Won't she though?

SAMANTHA
You shouldn't joke about that kind of stuff?

TEENY
What's your problem?

SAMANTHA
(still pissed)
I said nothing! Are you deaf?!

An athletic kid, KENNY, whizzes by on his bike.

CHRISSY
Hey Kenny, where's the fire?

KENNY
Softball game at Kindall's field.

Roberta turns to the girls, excited:

ROBERTA
What do you say guys? Let's go!

CHRISSY
(not enthused)
It's gonna be all boys.

TEENY
(greatly enthused)
So what are we waiting for?

They all look to Samantha's who's still a little morose.

TEENY
What do you say, Sam?

SAMANTHA
(disappointed)
I guess we really can't find out anything else about Johnny until we talk to my Grandma tomorrow.

ROBERTA
So let's kick some ass!

CUE UP "AMERICAN PIE" by Don McLean as WE CUT TO:

EXT. VACANT FIELD - AFTERNOON

A neighborhood softball game in full swing. Enough boys and girls to fill every infield and outfield position on both teams. The stuff happy, childhood memories are made of.

Our girls are on the team at bat. They sit on a wooden fence, behind home plate, flanked by boys on both sides.

Kenny steps up to the plate and takes a few practice swings. He taps the plate with the bat. Ready.

OUTFIELD
Hey, batter batter batter --

Scott Wormer, the pitcher, tosses the ball.

OUTFIELD
Swing.

Kenny swings. Meets air. The catcher tosses the ball back to

Scott.

ROBERTA
That's okay Kenny. Eye on the ball.

She's into this.

OUTFIELD
Hey, batter batter --

The pitcher throws. Kenny swings. CRACK! Line drive. Kenny's on first.

Roberta jumps off the fence and picks up a bat.

TEENY
The home run mamma steps up to the plate.

SAMANTHA
Just hit the ball Roberta.

Cheers from her teammates. Morton, the nerd whose fortune Samantha told, smiles at Chrissy. Chrissy looks around. Can't believe he's flirting with her.

Samantha and Teeny watch, amused.

Roberta steps up to the plate and exchanges glares with Scott as the feud continues.

SCOTT
This is for yesterday.

He throws the ball. Almost nails her with his fast pitch, but she jumps out of the way at the last second.

CATCHER
Ball one.

Scott shakes it off. Another pitch. Swing.

CATCHER
Strike one.

He throws the ball back to Scott.

OUTFIELD
Hey, batter-batter.

CHRISSY
Come on Roberta. Touchdown.

Teeny and Samantha roll their eyes. Chrissy will never learn. Morton climbs onto the fence and sits next to Chrissy.

MORTON
Hello dear.

CHRISSY
Get lost, nerdo.

Morton doesn't budge. Instead, he just sits there and smiles at her, lovingly, as if he knows their destiny.

OUTFIELD
Hey batter batter... swing.

Strike two.

TEENY
Shake it off babe.

JIMMY (O.S.)
Who you kiddin'? Girls can't play softball.

Roberta turns around and looks at JIMMY, the meanest kid in town. He sits on the fence, behind home plate.

ROBERTA
What did you say?

JIMMY
I said girls can't play softball.

TEENY
Uh, oh.

Roberta drops the bat and approaches Jimmy.

CHRISSY
Roberta, remember you're a lady.

JIMMY
Why don't you go home and play with your dolls?

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Jimmy didn't know it, but the only doll Roberta ever played with was GI JOE.

POW! Roberta socks Jimmy in the eye, knocking him off the fence.

CATCHER
(excited)
Fight!

The outfield runs in and circles --

JIMMY & ROBERTA as punches fly. They roll. Roberta winds up on

top. She straddles Jimmy and beats the shit out of him.

Scott watches, impressed.

SCOTT
Come on Roberta, give it to him.

Samantha tries to break it up.

SAMANTHA
Roberta, come on that's enough.

She finally manages to pull Roberta off the young chauvinist. Roberta's a mess.

CHRISSY
Just look at your hair.

Chrissy tries to fix it, but Roberta slaps her hand away.

Jimmy stands. Wipes his bloody nose on his shirt sleeve.

JIMMY
Crazy bitch.

CHRISSY
Foul mouth.

SAMANTHA
How does it feel to have the crap knocked out of you by a girl?

JIMMY
(to Roberta)
It's too bad your mother's dead. Somebody needs to teach you to act like a girl.

This time it's Samantha who charges the punk and knocks him to the ground.

CATCHER
Fight!

The kids form another circle around the fighters and CHEER them on.

INT. ALBERTSON HOUSE - EVENING

Samantha enters, dirty and roughed up. The smile on her face let's us know she looks better than Jimmy.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Albertson sits on the couch. All decked out. Looking good in her short, short hot pants.

MRS. ALBERTSON
There you are. Samantha, I want you to meet a friend of mine, Mr. Kent.

Previously hidden by the hi-back lazy boy, MR. KENT stands, holding Angela in his arms.

MR. KENT
Hi Samantha.

He extends his hand to her.

MR. KENT
Your Mom's told me a lot of great things about you. Says you're a real good kid.

She stares at him as he waits for her to shake his hand.

MRS. ALBERTSON
Samantha?

She forces herself to extend her hand. They shake and he smiles a big, Cadillac salesmen smile... and that's what he does for a living. The gold Cadillac emblem hanging around his neck is a dead give away.

MR. KENT
Pleasure to meet you, little lady.

Samantha forces a smile.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Soups on. The conversation is forced.

MR. KENT
So, Samantha your mother tells me you're interested in science.

SAMANTHA
Science fiction.

MR. KENT
Have you ever been to the Smithsonian?

She shakes her head no.

MR. KENT
Oh, let me tell you, it's something to see.

He looks at her mother.

MR. KENT
Maybe we need to plan a trip to D.C. before school starts.

MRS. ALBERTSON
That would be just great. Wouldn't that be just great Samantha?

SAMANTHA
My dad's going to take us there.

Tension.

MR. KENT
Well, hell.

Samantha looks at him. He flashes that obnoxious smile. There's a big piece of spinach stuck between his two front teeth.

SAMANTHA
Mr. Kent --

MR. KENT
Please, call me Bud.

SAMANTHA
Bug?

MR. KENT
No, Bud. B.U.D.

SAMANTHA
Oh... you've got a piece of food stuck in your teeth.

Embarrassed, he reaches for his napkin and accidentally knocks over his wine glass. His shirt, soaked.

MR. KENT
Damn.

MRS. ALBERTSON
It's okay. Hold on. I'm sure Ted left some clothes here.

She leaves the room and Mr. Kent turns to Samantha.

MR. KENT
(smiling)
First date jitters.

Samantha forces a fake smile back at him. Mrs. Albertson returns with a bowling shirt.

MRS. ALBERTSON
Try this.

She helps him take off his shirt. He slips on Sam's father's bowling shirt. His name sewn on the pocket.

Samantha pushes herself away from the table and runs out of the room.

MRS. ALBERTSON
Samantha?

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Samantha enters and locks the door. She pulls the lid up on the toilet and vomits.

She moves to the sink and splashes water on her face.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

MRS. ALBERTSON (O.S.)
Samantha? Are you alright?

Samantha opens the door and barges out past her mother.

SAMANTHA
What the hell do you care?!

MRS. ALBERTSON
(shocked)
Samantha!

INT. HALLWAY - FOYER - SAME

Samantha grabs a jacket and heads for the front.

MRS. ALBERTSON
Where do you think you're going?

Samantha ignores her and throws open the door.

MRS. ALBERTSON
(attempting to gain control)
Young lady if you walk out that door you're going to be in a lot of trouble.

Samantha defiantly turns back toward her mother.

SAMANTHA
I don't really give a shit.

She leaves and her mother calls out:

MRS. ALBERTSON
Samantha!

She stands in the doorway, frustrated and sad.

EXT. ROBERTA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Roberta shoots hoops in her driveway. Scott walks passed the

house. He stops and watches Roberta sink one.

Roberta dribbles the ball back to the foul line. Shoots. Misses.

SCOTT (O.S.)
You're not following through.

She turns.

ROBERTA
Who asked you?

He shrugs. Away from his brothers, Scott seems shy and almost appealing. Silence.

SCOTT
Well, see ya.

He starts to walk away.

ROBERTA
Hey!

She tosses him the basketball. He looks up at her and smiles. This kid's got a crush on Roberta.

Scott takes a shot. Makes it in. She rebounds, dribbles past him and makes a lay up. Scott takes the ball out and sinks and misses. Roberta rebounds and shoots. Sinks it.

SCOTT
You're pretty good you know?

ROBERTA
(embarrassed)
Thanks.

She looks down at the ground and nervously shuffles her feet.

SCOTT
And not just for a girl. But you know, for a guy.

ROBERTA
Thanks.

He wipes some sweat from his forehead.

ROBERTA
You want a pop or something?

SCOTT
Sure Roberta, that'd be great.

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

CUE UP: "FALLIN' IN LOVE" by Hamilton Joe Frank and Reynolds as Roberta and Scott rock on the porch swing. Scott looks at Roberta. She catches his glance. They exchange nervous smiles. Scott takes a swig of his coke.

They swing.

SCOTT
(suddenly)
Roberta?

ROBERTA
(startled)
What?

SCOTT
Why do you think we fight all the time?

Roberta thinks about it.

ROBERTA
Just somethin' to do I guess.

SCOTT
I was just wondering, cause I think you're an okay girl.

ROBERTA
I always thought you hated me.

SCOTT
So did I.

They rock back and forth. He takes another swig of coke. Looks around nervously then scoots closer towards her. Roberta's aware of his movement but pretends she's not. He inches his way even closer. COUGHS.

Roberta stares straight ahead. He stretches then brings his arm down around her shoulders. She decides to let him keep it there.

SCOTT
Roberta?

ROBERTA
(blunt)
What?

SCOTT
(mumbling)
CoulIkssyou?

ROBERTA
What are you mumbling?

SCOTT
Would it be alright if I -

He stops. Sighs. Try's to find the strength to ask. I guess it's not so easy being the guy after all.

SCOTT
Can I kiss you?

Roberta ponders the question. Looks around to make sure no one is watching, especially her three older brothers.

ROBERTA
I guess.

SCOTT
Really? Oh. Okay great. Are you ready?

ROBERTA
You wanna do it now?

SCOTT
Sure.

ROBERTA
Oh.

She shrugs. Faces him. He inches his face closer to hers. His head tilts to the left. Hers to the right. Eyes close. Lips touch. First kiss. They pull away from each other.

SCOTT
That was nice.

ROBERTA
It was okay.

They swing silently. Listening to CRICKETS and BULL FROGS. The sounds of a summer night.

ROBERTA
Scott?

She's got his attention.

ROBERTA
If you mention this to anyone, especially your brothers, I'll beat the shit out of you.

EXT. TEENY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Teeny sits in a lawn chair, on top of the roof. A bowl of

popcorn on her lap and a bottle of coke by her side. The Drive-in is directly behind her house and Teeny watches tonight's feature presentation, "LOVE STORY".

As Ali McGraw says "love is never having to say you're sorry", Teeny mouths the words. She knows the dialogue by heart and WE REALIZE you can probably find Teeny here every night of the week.

A dog BARKS as Ali kicks the bucket. Teeny, annoyed picks up a pair of binoculars and looks around the neighborhood.

TEENY'S POV. - WE survey the area and the binoculars fall still on the nearby Elementary School playground where WE FIND --

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER

The concrete playground is well lit. Samantha spins an empty merry-go-round then watches it go round and round.

LATER

She climbs to the top of the monkey bars and hangs upside down.

LATER

Samantha swings on the swing set, starting slow but suddenly motivated to go higher and higher. Airborne.

LATER

Samantha slides down the slide. When she realizes someone's standing in front of her, Samantha GASPS. Then relaxes as WE PAN up to reveal:

SAMANTHA
You scared the hell out of me.

TEENY
Sorry. I didn't mean to.

SAMANTHA
For a second I thought you might be him.

TEENY
Johnny?

SAMANTHA
He's watching me constantly.
(looking around)
I can feel him.

TEENY
What are you doing out here by yourself?

SAMANTHA
Just thinking.

TEENY
In the summer?

She gets a smile out of Samantha.

SAMANTHA
Let's get out of here.

EXT. SHELBYVILLE - LATER

Teeny and Samantha, who's still a bit solemn, silently ride their bikes in the night. Teeny gives Samantha an ornery look then takes off speeding ahead of Samantha, who quickly kicks it into gear and peddles after her.

They race through the streets of the small town.

Teeny takes a short cut through a narrow alley, Samantha on her heels. It's neck and neck as they SPEED around the corner. SCREECH. Both girls skid to a stop when they see and hear --

SQUEAK SQUEAK SQUEAK. CRAZY PETE riding his bicycle toward them.

THE GIRLS don't move as --

Crazy Pete rides closer. He keeps his head down until the moment he passes by. Then, with a sudden movement, he looks up and makes eye contact with Samantha & Teeny.

Teeny utters a scared WINCE and takes off on her bike. Samantha quickly takes off after her.

Crazy Pete continues in the opposite direction. He turns his head and watches them ride away.

Teeny peddles at high speed for a few blocks. She finally comes to a stop in the middle of an empty SEARS PARKING LOT. Samantha SKIDS her bike to a stop beside her.

Teeny gets the GIGGLES. Stops herself.

TEENY
Sorry. It happens when I get nervous.

More anxious laughter. It's infectious. Before you know it, Samantha gets the giggles. The sit down in the middle of the big empty parking lot, holding their sides, in hysterics.

The laughter subsides and they catch their breath, but as soon as they look at each other, it starts all over. Gut busting giggles. They finally calm down.

Samantha looks across the parking lot, at the lit up SEARS sign.

SAMANTHA
Wanna try out the tree house?

EXT. SEARS - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha and Teeny climb a tall chain link fence and illegally trespass into Sears' lawn and garden shop.

Behold -- THE TREE HOUSE they've been working all summer to buy. Teeny follows Samantha up the ladder and into the structure.

INT. TREE HOUSE - SAME

The cozy clubhouse is lit by a nearby street light. Samantha sits in the corner and Teeny lays on the floor.

TEENY
Truth or dare?

SAMANTHA
Truth.

TEENY
If you were stranded on a deserted island with me, Chrissy and Roberta and there was nothing to eat what so ever, who would you kill for food?

SAMANTHA
I dispute the question. The odds of that happening are slim and nil.

TEENY
You still have to answer.

Samantha considers her reply.

SAMANTHA
I guess it would have to be Chrissy.

TEENY
Why?

SAMANTHA
Because she'd feed more people.

They GROAN and GIGGLE at the thought.

SAMANTHA
Truth or dare?

TEENY
Truth.

SAMANTHA
(serious tone)
Do you like your parents?

TEENY
I don't really know my parents. But, as far as I can tell they're ass holes.

SAMANTHA
That soldier was on the money when he said your parents aren't always right. Just because they're adults, it doesn't mean they know what the hell they're doing.

TEENY
I never thought they did.

SAMANTHA
I did.

TEENY
What are we talking about, Sam?

Samantha looks at the floor.

SAMANTHA
My dad moved out. They're getting a divorce.

TEENY
I thought your parents got along.

SAMANTHA
I lied.

TEENY
Why?

Samantha shrugs.

SAMANTHA
I don't know.

TEENY
I heard in another ten years half the population will be divorced.

SAMANTHA
I find that really hard to believe.

Teeny scoots next to Samantha and puts her arm around her best friend.

TEENY
You know, this is between them, Sam. It doesn't have anything to do with you.

SAMANTHA
It should.

They sit in silence as Samantha finally breaks down and sheds painful tears on Teeny's shoulder.

SAMANTHA
I really miss him.

TEENY
It's okay.

Teeny's eyes fill with tears as she shares Samantha's hurt.

TEENY
It's okay.

A moment of sheer heartache.

TEENY
I'll always be here for you.

Samantha's SOBS lighten as she pulls away from Teeny and wipes her eyes.

SAMANTHA
Thanks.

WE HEAR THUNDER RUMBLING in the distance.

Teeny pulls her strand of love beads from her neck. Samantha watches curiously as Teeny bites the string in half with her teeth. She ties one half as a bracelet around Samantha's wrist and the other half around her own wrist.

TEENY
(holding up her wrist)
Best friends for life.

Samantha lifts her arm and touches her bracelet to Teeny's.

SAMANTHA
(rejuvenated)
For life.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
When you're twelve, without effort, you live in the moment. You don't regret the past or worry about the future... and at that moment, in the tree house, Teeny filled my heart
(MORE)

SAMANTHA (CONT.)
with hope and comfort. The thought of us drifting apart would have never occurred to me. I had no doubt we would be best friends for life.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - LATER

Samantha and Teeny walk their bikes down the sidewalk.

TEENY
You can stay at my house if you think the bug is still there.

Nicknames catch on in a hurry. Samantha looks at her watch.

SAMANTHA
He's probably gone.

A light SPRINKLE of rain begins to fall. Samantha and Teeny look up at the sky.

Dark THUNDER CLOUDS roll past the moon.

SAMANTHA
We're gonna get wet.

Teeny hops on her bike and takes off.

TEENY
Not me.

Samantha takes off after her. They reach the top off a hill and zoom down it.

The race is on until Samantha stops and looks around on the ground. Teeny realizes she's stopped and rides back to her.

TEENY
What did you lose?

SAMANTHA
My bracelet fell off.

TEENY
You lost it already?

SAMANTHA
It's gotta be around here somewhere.

They search the street, looking for the love beads. Teeny lays on her stomach and looks down a --

SIDEWALK STORM DRAIN where the bracelet lies amongst a pile of mud and leaves.

TEENY
There it is.

She reaches for the necklace.

TEENY
I can't reach it.

Samantha joins her and looks down into the drain.

SAMANTHA
I don't see it.

TEENY
(pointing)
There.

Samantha finally spots her friendship gift.

SAMANTHA
I'll get it.

She slides down into the drain. It's a tight fit but she finally squeezes into the sewer.

INT. SEWER - SAME

Samantha looks around the tight space.

SAMANTHA
There's a lot of stuff down here.

Samantha picks up a yo-yo and tosses it up to Teeny, who catches the toy.

TEENY
Hurry up okay? It's really starting to rain.

Samantha sifts through the dead leaves and grabs her bracelet.

SAMANTHA
Got it.

EXT. STREET - SAME

A HEAVY RAIN pours down.

Teeny stands and pulls the hood of her jacket up over her head. A peculiar look comes over her face when SHE HEARS the sound of RUSHING WATER.

She looks around and spots A THIN STREAM OF WATER which GUSHES down the side of the street, heading straight for the storm drain.

TEENY
(alarmed)
Samantha!

INT. SEWER - SAME

Samantha tucks the love beads into her pocket as the water begins to pour into the storm drain. Samantha calmly jumps to grab onto the opening, but can't reach it. She jumps again.

WE REALIZE she's too short to make it back up.

The water level quickly rises to Samantha's knees.

SAMANTHA
(staring to worry)
Give me a hand.

Teeny reaches into the storm drain and Samantha grabs her hand.

EXT. STREET - SAME

With all her little might, Teeny pulls Samantha toward the opening. She gives it a valiant effort, but the enormous water pressure forces Samantha back into the sewer.

INT. SEWER - SAME

A RAT SQUEALS and swims around in the water. It jumps on Samantha's shoulder.

Samantha SCREAMS. Shaking with terror, she pushes it off. But then there's another and another.

SAMANTHA
Teeny, help me!

EXT. STREET - SAME

Teeny hurries to the man hole located over the drain and tugs on the solid iron ring.

INT. SEWER - SAME

Samantha CRIES as the water level raises up to her neck then covers her mouth. She fights for her life, bobbing for air, but it's useless as the water rises to the top of the drain. She disappears under the water and doesn't pop back up.

Suddenly, the MAN HOLE over the drain flies open and --

CRAZY PETE pops his head through the hole. He quickly climbs down into the sewer and disappears under the water.

Moments of agonizing tension go by then finally --

He shoves Samantha out of the water and through the man hole, to safety.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Samantha COUGHS and GASPS for breath as Crazy Pete climbs out of the manhole and sits beside her.

Teeny stares at them both in shock.

Samantha takes a few deep breaths then looks up at Crazy Pete. They lock eyes and share a heartfelt moment.

SAMANTHA
You saved my life.

He stands up and offers Samantha a hand up. She immediately entrusts her hand in his as he pulls her to her feet.

He turns to Teeny, who backs away, still frightened by him.

PETE
Why are you afraid of me?

Teeny nervously shrugs.

SAMANTHA
It's just weird that you only ride your bike at night.

PETE
I don't like being made fun of. There's less people around at night.

A rude awakening for Teeny, who now looks him straight in the eye.

TEENY
I'm sorry.

PETE
It's alright.

Like a shadow in the night, Crazy Pete climbs onto his bicycle and rides away in the rain.

Samantha and Teeny watch him.

TEENY
We'll see you around, Pete.

He waves as he rides out of sight.

TEENY
Crazy Pete's not crazy at all. He's just different.
(beat)
I hate that we were afraid of him. If he wouldn't have been here, Sam...

Teeny looks at Samantha with tears in her eyes.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
I think that was the most real moment Teeny had ever experienced. It was an event that could conceivably change a person. Bring them out of their world of pretend. But not Teeny. She committed the moment to memory alright and recreated it in an audition years later. But Teeny didn't play Teeny, she played me.

Samantha pulls the love beads out of her pocket and holds them up for Teeny to see.

SAMANTHA
I got 'em.

Teeny gives Samantha a reprimanding look then breaks into a smile. Samantha returns the gesture.

They walk their bicycles home, arm in arm, bonded by their shared fate.

EXT. ROBERTA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Samantha, Teeny and Roberta paint the garage door. Chrissy eats a Twinkee and monitors their progress.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
We told Chrissy and Roberta about what happened with Pete, but neither one of them believed us. And life quickly got back to the business at hand. Earning the rest of the money to buy the tree house and finding a way to help "Dear Johnny" rest in peace.

As the girls paint they listen to the radio and SING along to "SUGAR, SUGAR" by the Archies.

GIRLS
Sugar, dun dundun dun dun dun
Oh honey honey dun dundun dun dun dun
You are my candy chiiiiiiild
and you got me wantin' yooooooou...

Chrissy looks over the door with her mother's critical eye.

CHRISSY
Roberta, you missed a spot.

ROBERTA
Why don't get your butt off the asphalt and help?

CHRISSY
(eating the frosting out of the twinkee)
You know if I don't eat every few hours I get nauseous.

TEENY
Wormer alert.

THE WORMERS walk up the sidewalk, toward THE GIRLS who cringe at the sight of them.

CHRISSY
I thought I smelled something foul.

WORMER #2
That's your arm pits, lard ass.

CHRISSY
Your wit astounds me.

WORMER #2
Hey, I ain't no nit wit.

SCOTT AND ROBERTA steal a look. He smiles politely and bows to the girls.

SCOTT
Ladies.

He walks on and his brothers follow, confused by Scott's new found gentlemanly manner.

SAMANTHA
What's his problem?

TEENY
Maybe he's a pod person.

ROBERTA
Maybe he's not such a creep after all.

Roberta watches him walk away, love struck.

Samantha catches her gaze and realizes Roberta's got a crush. She decides to keep it to herself.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
That was the day Roberta quit taping her boobs.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

The girls stand on the porch of this victorian style house. It's a little run down, but still charming and full of history. A grandma's house. Samantha RINGS the BELL and a moment later, GRANDMA ALBERTSON opens the door and surveys the group.

GRANDMA
I didn't know you were bringing the whole neighborhood.
(beat)
Well, come on in. You're just in time for some fresh squeezed lemonade.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

The place is furnished with antiques collected over a lifetime. Grandma acknowledges Samantha with a hug.

GRANDMA
How you holdin' up?

SAMANTHA
Fine Grandma.

GRANDMA
It's good to see you child. I've been worried to death about you.

The other girls look on, curious once again. Accept for Teeny who jumps in and puts her arm around Samantha.

TEENY
She's just fine Mrs. Albertson. We're taking good care of her.

GRANDMA
I'm glad to hear that. Let me get you girls some lemonade and then you can fill me in on this important question you need to ask me.

She walks out of the room and Chrissy confronts Samantha.

CHRISSY
Why's your Grandma so worried about you?

Samantha shrugs off the question.

SAMANTHA
Who knows --

But her friends can read her well.

ROBERTA
Maybe we can help.

Maybe they can and Samantha relents:

SAMANTHA
I'll tell you later, okay?

Grandma enters carrying a tray of lemonade and glasses. She sits it down and pours.

GRANDMA
Here you go.

CHRISSY
Thank you Mrs. Albertson.

The girls all grab a glass and one by one sip the lemonade. One at a time they make wrenching grimaces when they sip the sour drink.

GRANDMA
How is it?

ALL
(lying)
Great.

Teeny turns her face, sticks out her tongue and dries it with her shirt sleeve.

Grandma sits down in her rocking chair.

GRANDMA
Now what's this question?

SAMANTHA
Do you remember a little boy our age and his mother who died here in 1945? Jonathan and Beverly Anne Simms?

A look of surprise comes over Grandma.

GRANDMA
Why do you ask?

SAMANTHA
We were wondering how they died.

TEENY
Did something terrible happen to them?

GRANDMA
Yes. And it's the type of thing you girls don't need to hear about. It'll give you nightmares for weeks.

ROBERTA
Tell us!

GRANDMA
I don't think it's a good idea.

SAMANTHA
Come on Grandma. What happened?

GRANDMA
It took me a long time to forget that terrible tragedy Samantha and I don't want to drudge it up.

A look of disappointment reads on Samantha's face.

GRANDMA
You know, you're just like your Grandpa. He had some wierd fascinations. Curious about everthing that went on around these parts. That old poop used spend hours "recording history" he'd say in those damn scrapbooks he used keep.

Samantha's look of disappointment disappears.

SAMANTHA
I remember those scrapbooks.

Grandma notices Teeny's lemonade glass is still full.

GRANDMA
(to Teeny)
Don't you like your lemonade?

TEENY
Oh, it's fresh squeezed alright. Tastes like you zipped down to Florida and picked these lemons this morning.

A CAR HORN BEEPS and Grandma looks at her watch.

GRANDMA
That's old Eda and old Martha.

She stands.

GRANDMA
I'd love to chat but we've got a Bingo tournament to hit over in Farmland.

She grabs her sweater.

GRANDMA
Get a move on it girls. I wanna make sure I get some good cards.

They look to Samantha who shrugs then stands and follows her Grandma out.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Two old women, EDA and MARTHA, wait impatiently in a dated Cadillac Coup De Ville.

EDA
(calling to Grandma)
Hurry it up, we're late.

Grandma locks the front door and hurries to the car, waiting in her driveway. She turns back to the girls who still stand on the porch:

GRANDMA
You girls take care. Come see me again soon Samantha.

She climbs into the back seat and the second she closes the door, EDA SLAMS it into gear and PEELS out down the street.

TEENY
They must love Bingo.

ROBERTA
Looks like we hit another dead end.

A devious smile comes across Samantha's face.

SAMANTHA
You're wrong Roberta. I know where those scrapbooks are.

The girls, curiously, look to Samantha.

INT. ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

THIN BEAMS of SUNLIGHT STREAM through a few cracks in a boarded up window. COBWEBS hang from the vaulted ceilings. And collectibles from several decades are piled up high in this swap meet junkies paradise. It's a great old place.

Suddenly, the room is filled with more light as a BOARD is pulled off the window. Then another until WE SEE Samantha's face staring at us. She yanks open the window and crawls in through the small window.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Teeny, Roberta and Chrissy climb the television antenna up to the attic window. One by one, they crawl in.

CHRISSY
Hurry it up. We could get arrested for this.

She looks around nervously until she finally squeezes in through the window. A tight fit.

INT. ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

The girls sort through trunks of old clothes, photographs and historical memorabilia.

Teeny stands in front of an old full length mirror and holds up a lacy victorian dress to herself. She tosses it aside and pulls another from a pile. Her face lights up when she notices an old VICTROLA.

She CRANKS the handle and the record spins. Teeny places the needle on the old 78 and WE HEAR a very SCRATCHED version of Frank Sinatra's "YOUNG AT HEART."

ROBERTA
I think I found something.

She places a photo album on her lap and opens it up. Samantha sits next to her and they flip through the photos.

CLOSE ON: A WEDDING picture of Samantha's mother and father.

SAMANTHA
Those are my parents.

ROBERTA
They make a great couple.

SAMANTHA
(sad)
Yeah.

She stands and open another trunk.

SAMANTHA
Jackpot.

The trunk is filled with newspapers, magazines and several scrap books. Samantha sifts through a stack of newspapers and zero's in on the headline she's looking for.

SAMANTHA
They <u>were</u> murdered.

She pulls out the newspaper and the other girls look.

HEADLINE: 2 DEAD IN BRUTAL MURDER

A somber tone overtakes them all as Samantha reads the article.

SAMANTHA
Beverly Anne Simms and her twelve year old son Jonathan were found brutally murdered late friday night. Their bodies were discovered by Peter Simms.
(MORE)
SAMANTHA (CONT.)
After leaving the Side Car Pub around midnight he entered his house around twelve fifteen to find his wife and son had been shot to death in their home.
(scanning)
The sheriff's department believes a burglar was caught off guard and killed the two witnesses when they apparently woke from their sleep.
(scanning)
They have no clues as to a suspect.
(scanning further)
The sheriff has every reason to believe the robber was probably just passing through and has left the area.

Samantha turns the page:

SAMANTHA
It's an editorial from my Grandpa to the paper.
(reading)
What appears to be, isn't at all. That's the knowledge we've gained from the brutal deaths of Jonathan and Beverly Anne Simms. If we thought Shelbyville was a safe sleepy town, sheltered from the violence of the outside world, we were deceived --

CHRISSY
(defensive)
-- Shelbyville is a safe town. I mean, if something like this could happen here, imagine how bad it is out there.

"YOUNG AT HEART" ends. The record continues to go around and round. SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH.

Abruptly, Roberta flings off the needle, grabs the record and SMASHES it into the mirror, which SHATTERS. She looks at her distorted reflection and begins to SOB.

CHRISSY
Roberta, it's okay.

ROBERTA
No it's not. No it's not okay. Why did they have to die? Why did she have to die?

She sits on the floor and brings her knees to her chest. Cuddling into a ball.

ROBERTA
My dad lied to me. He said she died instantly. That a beautiful angel swooped down to earth and took her up to heaven before she had a chance to hurt, for even a second. Why did she have to die and why did he have to lie to me. He's all I have left and he lied.

CHRISSY
He's not all you have left.

She sits beside Roberta. Samantha and Teeny quickly follow and they all sit in a circle on the floor.

ROBERTA
(crying)
All I can count on is you guys.

SAMANTHA
(confessing)
I know how you feel.

ROBERTA
(through her tears)
What do you mean?

SAMANTHA
(ashamed)
My dad moved away. They're getting a divorce.

CHRISSY
(gasps)
A divorce?!

ROBERTA
I'm sorry Samantha.

TEENY
Screw 'em You have us.

CHRISSY
I say we make a pact here and now.

They listen.

CHRISSY
We're here for each other, always. No matter what happens in life. If Teeny goes off to Hollywood or I get married to rich doctor... or a rich lawyer we remember this day and this pact. When we need a friend we're there for each other. We can count on it. No matter what.

Samantha lays her hand flat on floor. Teeny lays hers on top of it. Roberta rests hers on top of Teeny's then Chrissy finishes off the pile.

SAMANTHA
It's a pact.

ALL
All for one and one for all.

They share comforted smiles as.

SAMANTHA
I think now, more than ever, we need to put "Dear Johnny" to rest.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - EVENING

A THICK FOG rolls into the neighborhood as late afternoon surrenders to evening.

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

The same heavy mist finds its way into the cemetery where WE PAN through the thick haze and find --

SAMANTHA, TEENY, CHRISSY & ROBERTA sitting in a circle, preparing to send "Dear Johnny" home. They're somber, serious.

Samantha places the three white candles into the center of the circle and lights them one by one.

SAMANTHA
Is everyone ready?

They slowly lay their hands flat on the blanket and join the circle -- thumbs and pinkie fingers touching.

TEENY
Ready.

ROBERTA
Ready.

CHRISSY
Ready.

SAMANTHA
We brought "Dear Johnny" back from the dead and it's up to us to send him home. Everybody close your eyes.

The girls comply and shut their eyes tightly.

SAMANTHA
Bless us in our pursuit of the spirit world. Keep our circle safe from those who promote evil and seek to harm.

A moment of silence.

SAMANTHA
Dear Johnny, we know you and your mother were brutally murdered. Did you come back to tell us who did it? We're here to help you rest in peace, Johnny. We're listening.

In the distance WE HEAR a RUMBLE slowly growing louder. Coming closer. The girls all open their eyes at once.

TEENY
He's here.

They look in all directions, searching the fog.

SAMANTHA
Don't break the circle!

They grip lock hands.

SAMANTHA
We just want to help, Johnny.

CHRISSY
Don't hurt us!

Then, from out of the fog FLOATS DEAR JOHNNY'S TOMBSTONE coming right at them.

The girls simultaneously SCREAM.

The TOMBSTONE DANGLES IN THE AIR.

The girls, wide eyed, stare at it as the RUMBLING dies down.

SAMANTHA
Tell us who did it, Johnny!

They ECHO another SCREAM when a MAN walks out of the fog, toward them.

TEENY
It's the killer!

CHRISSY
Don't hurt us!

Behind the man, a patch of fog clears and WE REALIZE --

He is a CITY WORKER and climbed off a TRACTOR, which is HAULING A NEW TOMBSTONE for "Dear Johnny's" grave.

MAN
This isn't a playground... It's a cemetery and you kids should have a little respect for the dead.

SAMANTHA
We have a lot of respect for the dead.

ROBERTA
That's why we're here.

SAMANTHA
We resurrected "Dear Johnny" from the grave.

MAN
Oh, really.

TEENY
How did you think his tombstone got cracked down the middle?

MAN
I knocked it over with my tractor.

SAMANTHA
(disappointed)
You did?

MAN
It's not easy to mow around all these head stones.

He walks over to "Dear Johnny's" grave and lowers the tombstone.

WE PAN across the faces of four disillusioned girls.

CHRISSY
I'm not doing any more of these dumb seances. They're a waste of time.

ROBERTA
I can't believe we actually thought we did it.

TEENY
But what about the ouiji board?

Chrissy and Roberta give her a look.

CHRISSY
Give it up.

Samantha watches him set "Dear Johnny's" new headstone.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
I knew at that moment our days of playing make believe were over. As we grow older it becomes difficult to throw caution to the wind and just believe. It's not that we don't want to, but too much has happened, and we can't.

Samantha stuffs the seance supplies into her back pack.

SAMANTHA
Let's go.

They walk out of the cemetery and as they pass a garbage can, Samantha tosses the back pack into the trash. They hop onto their bicycles and as they are about to ride off --

ROBERTA
(looking on)
Hey look, it's Crazy Pete.

The others follow her gaze and see --

Crazy Pete sitting on his bicycle watching the worker replace "Dear Johnny's" headstone.

CHRISSY
What's he doing out before dark?

TEENY
Let's leave him alone.

They ride out of sight, unnoticed by Pete.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The girls whiz down the street on their bicycles. They pass a magnificent field of COLORFUL WILD FLOWERS and Samantha stops.

Teeny turns back to her.

TEENY
What's wrong?

SAMANTHA
I forgot something in the cemetery. Go on. I'll catch up.

They girls ride ahead and disappear out of sight.

Samantha climbs off of her bike and walks into the field of flowers. She picks a bouquet.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Samantha walks through the cemetery, with her flowers in hand. She approaches "Dear Johnny's" grave (the new tombstone now in place) and stops when she notices ANOTHER BUNCH of WILD FLOWERS propped up against the headstone.

Samantha senses someone's presence and quickly turns to see Pete standing behind her. She looks at him and then back to the flowers on Johnny's grave. She turns back to Pete.

SAMANTHA
(figuring it out)
Pete... You're Peter Simms.

PETE
(looking at Johnny's grave)
He was my son.

He looks over to the adjacent grave, where WE SEE flowers propped against Beverly Anne Simms' headstone.

PETE
And my wife.

SAMANTHA
It was a terrible thing that happened to them. I'm sorry.

PETE
For the longest time I thought it didn't have to happen. That I could of stopped it if I'd been home instead of down at the bar. But I don't think that's the case anymore.

Samantha listens intently.

PETE
Not after what happened with you yesterday. I was there for a reason. It was meant to be.
(beat)
I've wasted a lot of years. I'm sorry about that but I can't spend anymore time feeling sorry for myself.

He touches her cheek and looks at her with grateful eyes.

PETE
Things will happen in your life that you have no control over. Things you don't want to be. But don't let them get the best of you, young one. It may not always seem true, but you and the world are full of goodness. If you listen to your heart, it'll lead you where you need to go.

Samantha smiles at him then watches as he walks away, out of the cemetery and back into the world.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
He gave me the only gift he could. The lesson it had taken him a lifetime to learn.
(beat)
The girls would have loved to have heard about my talk with Pete, but I chose not to tell them. I believed it was meant to be my moment and I wanted to keep it for myself.

Samantha kneels down and places her flowers on "Dear Johnny's" grave.

SAMANTHA
Rest in peace, "Dear Johnny."

EXT. SEARS - DAY

Establishing shot of the old Sears and Roebuck Co.

INT. SEARS - SAME

The girls wander through the store and each fixate on a new item they suddenly want more than the tree house:

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Roberta's dad gave us the rest of the money we needed to buy the tree house. But when we got to Sears --

Teeny plays with a super 8 movie camera.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Teeny fell in love with a movie camera.

Roberta climbs into a canoe on display.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
And Roberta thought we should keep saving up for a canoe.

Samantha lightly touches the keys of an electronic typewriter.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
I saw a typewriter I just had to have and suggested we split up the money and each start saving up for what we wanted.

Chrissy stands at the catalogue order desk with her hands on her hips.

CHRISSY
You guys, we made a pact.

One by one, they walk away from their individual wants and join Chrissy. They dump out the money and pay for the tree house.

CHRISSY
All for one and one for all.

EXT. CHRISSY'S BACK YARD - DAY

Samantha, Teeny and Roberta hammer together their tree house as Carol King's "YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND" plays. Chrissy hangs pink curtains.

WE NOTICE they're no longer dressed alike. Chrissy still wears pink. Roberta wears a white t-shirt and cut offs. Samantha wears a black t-shirt and long blue jeans. Teeny wears short shorts and a tight tube top (modeling her own brand new budding breasts).

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - MID MORNING

A group of girls whiz by Chrissy's house on their roller blades and WE REALIZE it's PRESENT DAY.

A calm comes over the neighborhood and then WHAM! Chrissy's front door flies open and out rushes Roberta. She surveys the driveway. A rental car is parked behind her Jeep.

ROBERTA
(calling out)
Samantha!

She's right behind her.

SAMANTHA
(frazzled)
What can I do?!

ROBERTA
You're blocking my jeep.

SAMANTHA
I'll get the keys.

WE HEAR a SCREAM from inside the house.

ROBERTA
(calmly)
I'd hurry.

Samantha rushes back into the house.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAME

Chrissy is lying back on the plastic covered couch, in the middle of a contraction. AHHHHHHHHH!

TEENY
(on phone)
Doctor Morton Williams please?

Samantha scurries around looking for her keys.

SAMANTHA
(to Roberta)
I can't find the damn keys.

ROBERTA
They have to be here somewhere.

CHRISSY
Helloooo! I'm having a baby here and I don't seem to be on my way to the hospital.

Teeny hangs up the phone.

TEENY
Morton's in the middle of a root canal. He'll meet us at the hospital as soon as he can.

Chrissy SCREAMS as another contraction hits.

SAMANTHA
I can't handle this.

ROBERTA
Sure you can.

TEENY
What's the problem?

SAMANTHA
My car's blocking Roberta's and I can't find the keys.

TEENY
So we'll take the limo.

CHRISSY
(excited)
The limo?

EXT. CHRISSY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Teeny and Samantha slowly walk Chrissy toward the limo. Roberta hurries ahead of them, carrying Chrissy's suitcase. She approaches the limo DRIVER, who sits behind the wheel reading a book.

ROBERTA
Hop out.

DRIVER
Pardon me?

ROBERTA
I've got a pregnant lady here and I need to get her to the hospital.

DRIVER
No problem ma'am. Just tell me where it is and I'll get you there in a jiffy.

ROBERTA
A jiffy's not fast enough.

Roberta flings open the car door.

ROBERTA
(incredibly threatening)
I said move it buster.

Intimidated by her tone, the driver steps out of the car. Roberta scoots in behind the wheel just as Chrissy climbs into the back. As soon as Teeny and Samantha climb in Roberta FLOORS IT and takes off.

INT. LIMO - SAME

Chrissy looks around at the luxurious ride.

CHRISSY
Is that a VCR? I can't believe there's a VCR in here. Roberta, there's a VCR in here.

Roberta throws her a look in the rear view mirror and PEELS around the corner.

CHRISSY
Let's watch a movie.

SAMANTHA
You want to watch a movie at a time like this?!

Teeny pops a tape into the VCR and ON TELEVISION: It's Teeny in a love scene with some sexy TV star stud.

TEENY
This is a clip from my new series, MIAMI BEACH HEAT.

They all watch and then AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH! Another contraction hits Chrissy. Teeny grabs Chrissy's hand. The pain is intense and it freaks Samantha out.

SAMANTHA
Shit!

CHRISSY
No swearing around my baby.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - LATER

CHRISSY
SHIIIIIIIIIIIIIT!

Chrissy, feet up in the stirrups gives it a big push. Samantha holds one hand and Teeny holds her other.

CHRISSY
Get it out!

Roberta, who WE REALIZE is Chrissy's doctor, calms Chrissy as she delivers the baby.

ROBERTA
Remember to breathe and look at your focal point.

Chrissy looks up at Teeny who makes a ridiculous goofy face. Chrissy's laugh turns into another SCREAM as --

ROBERTA
Push Chrissy! Push!

CHRISSY
I change my mind about the drugs.

ROBERTA
It's too late.

CHRISSY
Give me the drugs or I'll kill you!!!

ROBERTA
PUSH!

CHRISSY
Aaaaaaaah!

SAMANTHA
(in awe)
Oh, my God I see its little head.

CHRISSY
Is it a boy or a girl?

SAMANTHA
It's just the head, Chrissy.

ROBERTA
This is going to be a big one now.
One more push.

Chrissy GRUNTS and gives it all she's got.

TEENY
You can do it! You can do it!

ROBERTA
Push. Push. Push.

CHRISSY
I want it out of me!

SAMANTHA
Come on Chrissy!

AHHHHHHH! Her face is flushed and filled with pain as she pushes with every ounce of strength she has left. And then the look on her face changes when she hears her baby cry.

ROBERTA
It's a girl.

Roberta rests the little child, still attached to its umbilical chord, on Chrissy's stomach. Chrissy, exhausted and drenched in sweat, smiles the biggest smile as she strokes her baby girl.

Teeny, laughs the most joyful laugh WE'VE ever heard.

Samantha, overwhelmed by the birth of life, cries big tears. Roberta hugs her and they share in Teeny's laughter.

Just then, Morton, wearing a dentist's smock, comes into the room.

MORTON
Am I too late?

The women step aside and he see's his wife and baby.

MORTON
Hello, dear.

If you haven't figured it out already, Morton is the nerd who's fortune Samantha told. Roberta hands him a pair of surgical scissors.

ROBERTA
You're just in time.

The women look on with amazement as Morton cuts the umbilical chord.

SAMANTHA
Was there ever a more innocent child?
(looking on with awe)
Welcome to this world, little one.

Chrissy looks at them all.

CHRISSY
(overjoyed)
I've got a baby girl.

EXT. GASLIGHT ADDITION - DAY

A group of kids whiz by on their bicycles. They're in a hurry.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Samantha and Teeny pack their belongings into their respective suitcases.

SAMANTHA
I was thinking about "Dear Johnny" yesterday.

TEENY
(remembering)
God, we loved a mystery.
(beat)
How much fun did we have that summer?

SAMANTHA
It was really the last time I can remember feeling like a kid.

Teeny locks her suitcase and sits on the bed.

TEENY
I used to send Pete a Christmas card every year... with some cash.

SAMANTHA
I didn't know that.

TEENY
Last year it came back in the mail.
He died.

Samantha sits on the bed next to Teeny.

SAMANTHA
Pete was "dear Johnny's" father.

TEENY
He was?

SAMANTHA
I went back to the cemetery the day we had that last seance and Pete was there, putting flowers on Johnny's grave. He said something that didn't mean as much to me then as it does now.

Teeny looks at her, waiting to hear more.

SAMANTHA
I've been running with my work. Intellectualizing other peoples emotions instead of feeling my own.
(beat)
I've wasted a lot of time.

Teeny puts her arm around Samantha, once again providing comfort for her friend.

TEENY
We're not that old Sam. We've got a lot of days left.

She brings a smile to Samantha.

SAMANTHA
You always were the hopeful one.

TEENY
And you still think too much.

SAMANTHA
We were lucky to have this place and each other. A part of me really wishes I could stay here.

TEENY
(in geste)
Well, I wouldn't go that far.
(sincerely)
But it would be nice to come back and visit more often.

SAMANTHA
It's a pact.

Teeny places her hand on top of Samantha's.

TEENY
All for one and one for all.

KID (O.S.)
Red rover red rover send Kathy right over.

Samantha looks out the window and sees NEXT DOOR, a group of neighborhood KIDS PLAY RED ROVER. Sam grabs Teeny's hand and tugs.

SAMANTHA
Come on.

INT. CHRISSY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Chrissy and Roberta look into a bassinet at the sleeping baby.

CHRISSY
I think there's something wrong with her. All she does is sleep.

ROBERTA
That's what she's suppose to be doing.

CHRISSY
It's going to be so hard to leave her and go back to work.

ROBERTA
They said you could take as much time as you wanted, right?

CHRISSY
Yeah, but when I'm not there everything goes to pot down at that bank.

There's a KNOCK on the window. Chrissy and Roberta turn to see Samantha and Teeny standing outside. Chrissy waddles over and opens the window.

SAMANTHA
Can you guys come out and play?

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

A big game of red rover in full swing. Samantha, Teeny, Roberta and Chrissy stand along the chain length fence.

SAMANTHA
(to Kids)
Can we play?

The kids look at them like they're crazy. But then finally --

LITTLE GIRL
Sure.

Samantha, Teeny and Roberta hop the fence. Chrissy waddles around to the gate.

TEENY
(excited to play)
Come on Chrissy.

As she slowly makes her way over to the game:

CHRISSY
Excuse me, but I just passed the equivalent of a nine pound kidney stone. You're lucky I'm standing.

SAMANTHA
Okay, who's it going to be?

Teeny sizes up the competition.

TEENY
Nerdy kid on the end.

CHRISSY
That's Willie Wormer.

ROBERTA
Scott's kid.

TEENY
No kidding.

SAMANTHA
Willie Wormer it is.

They get the giggles.

SAMANTHA
Red rover red rover, send Willie Wormer right over.

Willie takes a run. Picks up speed. Plows between Samantha and Teeny, but falls back on his ass.

The FOUR WOMEN REMAIN UNITED, hand in hand and all smiles.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
We all used to try so hard to fit it. What mattered most was being part of the gang. We wanted to look exactly alike. Do all of the same things. Practically be the same people. And when weren't looking, that changed.

WE PULL back into an AERIAL SHOT of the Gaslight Addition -- moving farther and farther into the sky.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Our world got bigger during the summer of 1970 --

The Gaslight Addition slowly grows tinier and tinier until we can no longer make out that it's there.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
-- and the Gaslight Addition got smaller.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END